

ADAPTATION PLANNING WITH COMMUNITIES

PRACTITIONER BRIEF 1



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Cover image: Mariam Chaibou of Maigochi village in Niger with the two of the four goats she has received through ALP's small ruminants scheme.

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Women in Dakoro, Niger participating in a discussion around climate vulnerability and capacity. Credit: ALP/CARE 2010

INTRODUCTION

Rural communities in Africa are increasingly confronted with the realities of climate change. Poor women, men and children living in these communities experience increased vulnerability, uncertainty and risk, bringing new and evolving challenges to securing their livelihoods and moving out of poverty. Community based adaptation (CBA) supports such communities to understand the changes they face and take informed and appropriate actions that result in climate resilient development on an ongoing basis. The ALP practitioner briefs document a range of practical approaches to community based adaptation based on the learning and experiences of the Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP) in Ghana, Niger and Kenya. For each CBA approach, information is provided on its purpose and value, good practices to apply and useful lessons, for use by practitioners, programme designers and decision-makers working in adaptation and all disciplines affected by the impacts of climate change.

This brief describes ALP's community adaptation action planning (CAAP) process, which has proven to be a key approach for building motivation and capacity for action on CBA among communities, while also strengthening community participation and influence in local government decision-making. The brief provides a conceptual overview of the process, as well as explanations and examples of how it works in practice, based on ALP experience in Ghana and Niger. It describes how to progress from climate vulnerability and capacity assessments, (such as CARE's CVCA - see references section) in a participatory community planning process. ALP community plans focused on livelihoods and natural resource issues, but the CAAP process described applies for addressing all climate sensitive sectors, for example health, education, energy, or social safety nets.

It is designed for CBA practitioners, including local government representatives, civil society organisations (CSOs) and other actors working on climate change issues at the local level. It will also be useful for policymakers and donors engaged in planning and allocation of resources for adaptation action.

Planning: An essential element of Community-Based Adaptation

Facilitating community-based adaptation is a challenging prospect, as it demands that practitioners apply a climate lens to already complex development processes, incorporating new information, thinking and approaches and working with different actors.

Planning is an essential element of CBA because successful adaptation depends on ability to manage climate impacts, risks and uncertainty, which requires forward-looking and informed decision-making. The basic process of planning involves analysing

information, identifying actions and relevant actors, prioritising and operationalising. These are critical skills that underpin adaptive capacity, enabling people to learn and use their knowledge and experiences to manage the risks and uncertainty that are associated with a changing climate. With these skills, people are able to process climate information, analyse their situation and underlying causes of vulnerability, plan for the future and make good decisions for their livelihood options and risk reduction strategies. Local institutions also require these skills to ensure that their activities and plans are resilient to climate change and support adaptation by communities.

With this understanding, ALP placed significant emphasis on planning processes within its overall CBA approach (see ALP CBA Brief in the references section for more information) building on existing good practice in community action planning and development. These efforts were centred on two levels:

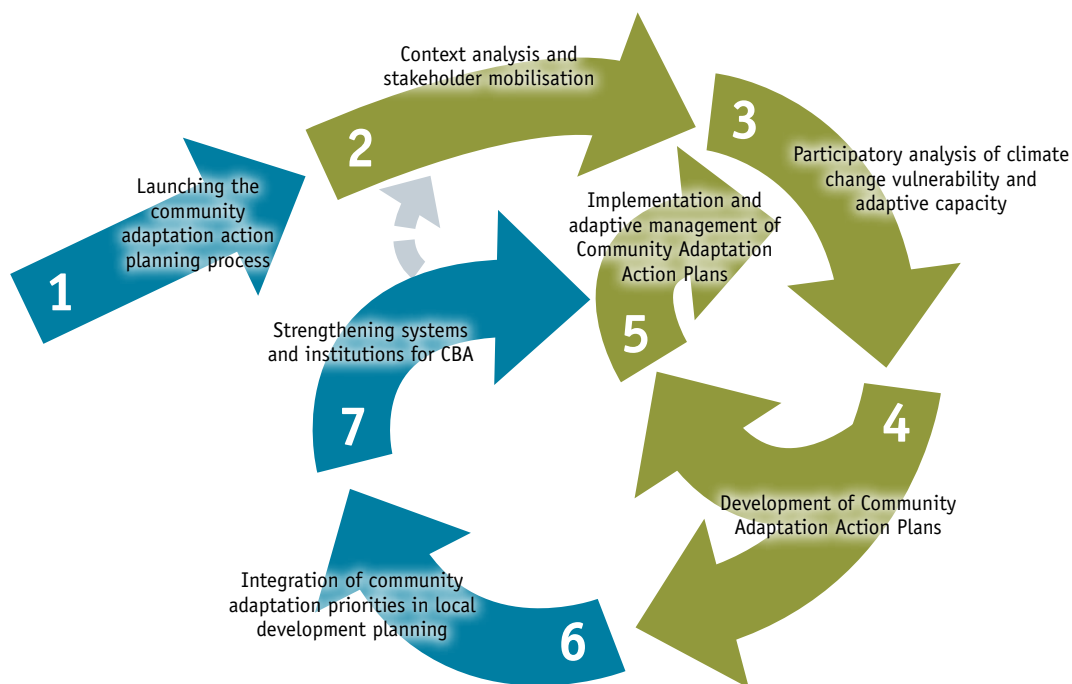
- The community level, through community adaptation action planning processes, which is the subject of this brief;
- The local government level, through integration of CBA in local development planning processes, (which is described in the Practitioner Brief on integration.)

There are important linkages between these two levels. When priorities identified through community adaptation action planning are reflected in local development plans, communities gain better access to the resources and support that they need to implement their plans. In addition, CAAP processes provide important insights into community experiences with climate change that can inform integration of adaptation in development plans. Planning at both levels will be most effective if it involves communities, local civil society organisations and local government representatives working together, generating learning and linkages that will enable collaborative action on adaptation into the future.

Overview of the Community Adaptation Action Planning (CAAP) Process

Participatory analysis and community-based planning processes are well-established tools for more equitable and sustainable development and risk reduction. There is much to be learned from these processes in terms of effective facilitation and communication at community level, however they do not specifically address the multiple threats and challenges that climate change presents. Building on existing community action planning processes used by CARE, ALP developed the CBA planning approach to bring local stakeholders together in an empowering learning process that builds adaptive capacity, while also resulting in tangible but flexible plans for communities to reduce their vulnerability to climate change over time. The community adaptation action planning process can be broken down into seven steps, which are shown in Figure 1 on the right.

Figure 1. *The community adaptation action planning process*



Participation is key to the CAAP process. The core of the process involves four steps that foster community participation, shown in green in the diagram. These steps aim to empower communities and build their ownership of adaptation plans and actions. A key element of the process is the iterative, learning-based approach that is demonstrated by the feedback loop from participatory analysis, through planning, implementation and adaptive management of the plans. This reflects the nature of adaptation as a flexible and continuous process of analysis, planning and action over time, informed by climate information.

While communities are at the centre of the process, participation of other local stakeholders is also necessary. Three additional steps, shown in blue, focus on establishing the initial process and the linkages between community-level activities and other levels, including local government development processes and broader systems and policies. Some of these actors may also be involved in the four community-led steps to enable mutual understanding. These linkages focus on creating an enabling environment for planning and implementation of community adaptation actions, which is important for effectiveness and sustainability of the CAAP process. In some contexts, further analysis and stakeholder mobilisation may be required to support the other steps, as shown by the dotted arrow in the diagram.

An overview of the steps is shown in Table 1. More details on the steps and the key activities involved are provided in the section that follows. The CAAP process steps 1 to 4 could be done over the course of a few months to a year or more depending on circumstances. The full process is a longer term and ongoing cycle of activities that should become self-sustaining.

Table 1. Overview of the steps in the community adaptation action planning (CAAP) process

Step	Purpose	Key Activities
1	Launching the community adaptation action planning process	Identify purpose, process and stakeholders for the CAAP process
		Establish the CAAP facilitation team; define the CAAP process; initial background research; stakeholder analysis; training for CAAP facilitation team
Community adaptation action planning		
2	Context analysis and stakeholder mobilisation	Understand the overall context; mobilize stakeholders to support and/or participate in the CAAP process
		Detailed background research; institutional mapping; analysis of existing policies and programmes; meetings with local institutions; community entry and mobilisation meetings
3	Participatory analysis of climate change vulnerability and adaptive capacity	Build common understanding of climate change vulnerability and adaptive capacity of different local level institutions and groups within the community
		Climate, risk, capacity and livelihood analysis; gender and diversity analysis; local government and community institutional analysis
4	Development of Community Adaptation Action Plans	Agree a Community Adaptation Action Plan, to serve as a road map to guide implementation, revision and monitoring of community adaptation priorities and support financial resource mobilisation.
		Community visioning; identification and prioritisation of proposed adaptation strategies; screening feasibility and implications of proposed adaptation strategies; identification of complementary actions; decisions on organisation, roles and responsibilities, finalisation and validation of Community Adaptation Action Plans
5	Implementation and adaptive management of Community Adaptation Action Plans	Strengthened adaptive capacity and reduced vulnerability of different groups to climate-related risks
		Capacity building for communities; implementation of planned adaptation actions (livelihood strategies, disaster risk reduction including early warning mechanisms, and advocacy); community monitoring, regular review and flexible adjustment of plans; climate information to support decision-making
Creating an enabling environment for planning and implementation		
6	Integration of community adaptation priorities in local development planning	Ensure that local development plans are responsive to and supportive of community adaptation priorities identified in their action plans
		Presentation of Community Adaptation Action Plans to local government institutions; integration of community adaptation priorities in local development plans and budgets.
7	Strengthening systems and institutions for CBA	Strong local systems and institutions (community, government, private sector and civil society) that enable CBA
		Capacity building for local institutions; promoting participatory planning processes; strengthening/ institutionalising climate information services and DRM systems; linking with existing community-based systems

Key Actors in the CAAP Process

While communities are at the centre of the CAAP process, there are a number of different actors implicated at different points. These actors and their roles are described below.

CAAP facilitation team: For CAAP to happen, a particular entity is required to take responsibility for leading the process, engaging stakeholders and facilitating the different steps. We call this the CAAP facilitation team. It could be comprised of a combination of people from local government entities, local or international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community level actors such as community based extension agents (CBEAs), community monitors or community based organisations (CBOs). The composition of the team is likely to be different the first time CAAPs are facilitated in a given location, when team members would generally be external actors, and later on, when community and local actors may take the lead in their own and neighbouring communities.

The first time CAAPs are done, the CAAP facilitation team leads local stakeholders through the early steps. As the capacity of the community and other stakeholders grows, this evolves to a more facilitative role, with local actors and institutions taking on leadership for different elements of the process. By the end of the process, the main role of the CAAP facilitation team is to broker linkages between local actors and other stakeholders, to share the learning and evidence emerging from the process and, potentially, to facilitate access to financial resources for implementation of CBA actions.

Communities: A community, in the vulnerable rural areas where CBA is most often applied, is generally understood as a group of people living in the same area and/or sharing common characteristics or interests. Depending on the context, communities may be defined differently and may have different relationships to each other and to their local government structures. The boundaries of the communities involved in CAAP processes are decided during the first step, as the process is being defined by the facilitation team. Within communities, there are different groups: women, men, elites, socially marginalised groups and livelihood groups, among others. These groups have different interests, capacities and priorities and face particular challenges in relation to climate change adaptation. These must be reflected in the CAAP process through disaggregated analysis and planning, followed by dialogue among and between the different groups to achieve a common understanding of the issues and a plan that is inclusive of all groups. Communities are the main decision-makers in the CAAP process and take ownership of the resulting plans. As capacity grows, community members may also take over facilitation of CAAP reviews and planning.

Local government representatives: The CBA process aims to influence local development planning and service provision as well as community-level actions, and aims for sustainability and replication through local government ownership. For this to occur, local government representatives must be engaged throughout the process. This includes representatives of key ministries or sectorial institutions such as local development planning, environment, agriculture, water, food security and disaster risk management, as well as elected representatives. The CAAP facilitation team works with these actors, keeping them informed, soliciting their support and ideally involving them as team members and/or in facilitating the process with communities. This has significant benefits in terms of developing their capacity on climate change adaptation and their commitment to CBA, as well as in strengthening linkages and accountability between local government institutions and their constituent communities.

Local civil society and private sector organisations: In addition to local government, there are other institutions that may be important actors in community development and therefore should be engaged in CAAP processes. These include local civil society organisations such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs), as well as private sector organisations that play an increasingly important role in livelihoods and provision of services, as well as delivery of adaptation programmes. These institutions are often valuable members of the CAAP facilitation team, as well as being involved as participants in the participatory analysis and planning processes. They provide essential support to communities in facilitating and implementing adaptation actions, monitoring and taking the planning processes forward in the future. As such, capacity development for these organisations is a priority.

The CAAP Process Step-by-step

The following sections provide more detail on the steps in the CAAP process. Within each major step, there are a number of different activities identified. In practice, many of these activities will occur concurrently. Practice examples from ALP provide further details on the approach.

STEP 1: LAUNCHING THE COMMUNITY ADAPTATION ACTION PLANNING PROCESS

The CBA process is launched when one or more actors make a commitment to following the CAAP process steps. In this initial step, the CAAP facilitation team defines the overall purpose, the process and identifies the stakeholders to be involved in the steps that follow. A shared vision and a clear work plan help to ensure efficient and effective facilitation of the CAAP process. Activities relating to this step include:

Establish the CAAP facilitation team: The composition and effective functioning of the CAAP facilitation team are critical to the success of the CAAP process. To ensure an integrated approach, this team ideally includes a blend of expertise, including knowledge of climate change and adaptation practice, as well as technical knowledge in relevant areas such as participatory community-based development, gender equality, technical sectors such as water, agriculture or financial services, and disaster risk reduction, among others. Strong communication and facilitation skills, as well as proficiency in the local language, are essential. Expertise needed but not available in the team can also be sourced for specific inputs during the process, for example from the meteorological service.

Preliminary entry meetings: Ideally the team should include community level actors who have good understanding of the community context and dynamics. Community based extension agents, community monitors or animators are often already in place. Prior to finalising the full facilitation team it may be necessary to conduct preliminary entry meetings and discussions with local leaders and local NGOs, either one on one or in a group meeting, to strengthen the entry point and help in the identification of community members for the facilitation team.

Define the CAAP process: As a first step, the CAAP facilitation team defines their aims for the process and identifies the results they hope to achieve. This enables development of a work plan for the CAAP process, which identifies the expected outputs and lays out initial ideas on timing and who should be involved in the different steps described in Table 1. Through this process, the team develops a shared vision of how the CAAP process will unfold, including a timeline, agreement on roles and responsibilities and commitment to guiding principles such as the ones shown in the ALP practice example in Box 1 below.

Training for CAAP facilitation team: The CAAP facilitation team generally requires some training, whether on climate change concepts or on particular tools or approaches that will be used in facilitating the process. It is helpful if training and capacity building for the CAAP facilitation team can occur early on in the process to enable the team to effectively lead on the background research and stakeholder analysis described below. However, training and capacity building should continue throughout the process as needs arise and knowledge or skill gaps are identified.

Initial background research: Initial background research informs the development of the CAAP process work plan, providing basic information such as the size and characteristics of the population and the agro-ecological context in the targeted communities. It also explores the systems and services that exist in the communities that may be relevant to the CAAP process.

Preliminary stakeholder analysis: Effective adaptation planning is a multi-stakeholder process, requiring identification and mapping of the key stakeholders that need to be involved in the following steps. This exercise identifies the key stakeholders at different levels (community, local and higher) and analyses their interests in the CAAP process. This includes initial identification of important local institutions as well as different groups within the community that must be engaged in the process. A more detailed analysis is conducted with communities in **Step 3**.

STEP 1 RESULTS:

- A trained CAAP facilitation team with a shared vision of the process
- A work plan with timelines, roles and responsibilities and guiding principles for the CAAP process
- Key stakeholders identified

ALP used the following good practice principles to guide facilitation of CAAP processes in Ghana and Niger:

- 1. Promote inclusive and informed participation and decision-making:** Empowering local stakeholders, including members of particularly vulnerable groups, to participate in and contribute to adaptation processes is more likely to result in local ownership and sustained outcomes
- 2. Integrate gender equality and women's empowerment:** Gender-responsive adaptation processes and plans help to ensure dialogue between and equitable benefits to men and women, and increased community attention to gender equality.
- 3. Context-specificity:** The CAAP process is most useful and meaningful to communities when it is tailored to reflect local realities, including cultural norms and practices and the timing of livelihood and domestic activities and local planning cycles.
- 4. Work within existing systems and institutions:** Integrating the different elements of the CAAP process within existing systems and institutions, rather than creating new mechanisms, enhances their sustainability and potential for replication.
- 5. Combine different knowledge types:** Integrating local and scientific knowledge along with information and knowledge from other sources ensures that decisions about adaptation strategies and plans are robust, locally relevant and responsive to climate change impacts.
- 6. Promote social learning:** Because adaptation is an ongoing process of managing risks and changes, social learning is a good opportunity for enabling co-generation of new insights and knowledge among multiple stakeholders.
- 7. Flexibility:** Flexibility in community plans and actions is critical to enable people to anticipate and respond to changes in climate conditions and trends, as well as other changes and opportunities.

STEP 2: CONTEXT ANALYSIS AND STAKEHOLDER MOBILISATION

Informed by a more detailed context analysis, this step engages and mobilises the key actors who will be involved throughout the following steps. The key activities include:

Detailed background research: Before beginning the participatory processes, CAAP facilitation teams undertake more detailed background research, using secondary sources and key informants. This deepens the initial background research, providing a deeper understanding of the socio-economic characteristics and demographics, agro-ecological context and available climate information for the targeted area. This aids in focusing the participatory exercises to ensure a respectful and informed interaction with communities, avoid duplication of effort and minimise the burden on community members.

Institutional mapping: An institutional mapping process is conducted to better understand the systems and services that are available to support community adaptation actions. It involves identification of institutions that have a mandate to support climate change adaptation, or that may have an influence over communities' ability to take action on adaptation. This includes government and research institutions as well as NGOs, climate change networks, service providers and development actors. This enables identification of potential collaborators, as well as targets for learning and influence.

Policy analysis: Policy analysis examines the opportunities and barriers for CBA in existing policies and plans of relevant government departments. This includes policies that specifically address adaptation, such as National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), but also development plans and strategies and policies for relevant sectors such as local government planning, water, agriculture and disaster risk management. This ensures that the CAAP facilitation team understand the current state of the enabling environment for CBA and helps in identifying advocacy targets.

Meetings with local institutions: To ensure that local institutions support and participate in the CAAP process, they are engaged in dialogue in the early stages. In particular, local government institutions represent important actors to enable priorities emerging from CAAP processes to be integrated in planning, services and support. Community leaders, local civil society organisations and private sector institutions also play an important role in development processes and therefore should be included in this dialogue.

Community entry and mobilisation meetings: Community meetings are held to introduce the CAAP facilitation team and provide community members with an overview of the process in terms of expectations for their participation and the anticipated results (notably, a community adaptation action plan). These meetings provide an opportunity for community members to ask questions and share concerns about the process, as well as to nominate representatives to actively participate in the different steps. It is up to the CAAP facilitation team to ensure that those selected for this role are representative of the community in terms of gender, ethnicity, age and socio-economic status.

Alignment with existing plans and processes: It is important to identify existing community development plans and planning processes, which can form a strong foundation and starting point for the CAAP process to build on. In addition this would help in strengthening what is working in the community and addressing challenges and setbacks in what is not. For example, the community could be encouraged to link adaptation planning with their existing systems and structures, such as CBOs and community animator or monitoring systems if they are in place.

STEP 2 RESULTS:

- Detailed context analysis
- Collaborators and targets for influence identified
- Analysis of relevant policies or planning processes
- Stakeholders engaged in the CAAP process, including community leaders, local civil society organisations, private sector institutions, community members

Box 2. ALP PRACTICE EXAMPLE: Community durbars in Ghana



Women dancing at Zambulugu community durbar in Northern Ghana to initiate the start of the community adaptation action planning process. ALP/CARE 2010

In Ghana, the initial community mobilisation consisted of what is called a 'durbar', a traditional gathering where community members, the chief and other local leaders are in attendance. At these meetings, the facilitation team explained the CAAP process, the community members were able to ask questions and roles and responsibilities as well as meeting schedules were agreed. Ceremonies were performed to mark the community's commitment to the process, including singing, dancing, prayers and offerings to secure the support of their gods for the actions to come.

STEP 3: PARTICIPATORY ANALYSIS OF CLIMATE CHANGE VULNERABILITY AND ADAPTIVE CAPACITY

The CAAP process is grounded in understanding of the vulnerability and existing adaptive capacity of different groups within the community. Participatory analysis is the starting point in building community ownership of the CAAP process, and is intended to be a valuable process for communities, as the dialogue generates new knowledge and understanding and helps in developing analytical skills. For this to occur, the analysis must be designed with the dual purpose of gathering and sharing information that gives the community members and the CAAP team new insights and strengthening the capacity of local stakeholders. This provides the basis for identification of actions that reduce risks, enable climate-resilient livelihoods and strengthen adaptive capacity for the longer term.



Community visioning exercise in Tariganga in Northern Ghana Credit: CARE/ALP Ghana 2012

While the analysis process must be tailored to the specific context, purpose and desired outcomes, the key elements are:

Climate, risk, capacity and livelihood analysis: This analysis involves a series of focus group discussions using participatory tools with representatives of different groups. At a minimum, this includes separate groups of women and men to enable gender-disaggregated data collection and allow both groups to speak freely without the influence of their spouses, relatives or other community members of the opposite gender. Often it also includes different wealth or livelihood groups. The data generated includes information on current climate-related risks affecting people, community observations of climate trends and changes, impacts of climate related hazards and changes on livelihoods and current responses. The analysis also reveals differences in vulnerability and adaptive capacity between women, men, youth and different livelihood and wealth groups. This builds understanding of the drivers of risk and the underlying causes of vulnerability, which represent potential barriers to successful adaptation. Following the focus group discussions, the information is analysed by the CAAP facilitation team and the findings are validated in a community meeting.

Gender and diversity analysis: Gender analysis engages a range of men and women from the community in dialogue to explore the dynamics of gender relations in the communities of concern; shifts in gender relations with changing climate and livelihood conditions; drivers of and barriers to change in gender relations; and differences in climate change vulnerability between women and men. This is a critical input to ensure that both the CAAP process and the resulting action plan are gender-equitable. In some contexts, there are other socially marginalised groups or specific livelihood groups that require particular attention, requiring targeted analysis to examine differential vulnerability based on other issues such as ethnicity, age or resource access.

Community institutional analysis: The organisations, services and linkages available to communities are important determinants of adaptive capacity. Using tools such as Venn Diagrams, an institutional analysis is conducted with communities. This process identifies the internal (formal or informal) and external organisations such as NGOs, CBOs, local government and other actors that are relevant to the community, their role and their existing relationship with the communities. This provides a basis for determining how they may be engaged in the CAAP process, as well as identifying needs for capacity development for local institutions.

STEP 3 RESULTS:

- Climate-related hazards, risks and existing response strategies for different groups identified and acknowledged by the community
- Analysis report(s) incorporating climate, risk, capacity and livelihood analysis; gender and diversity analysis and institutional analysis
- Initial identification of adaptation priorities and 'quick win' activities (see ALP practice example box 4 below for more details)

Box 3. ALP PRACTICE EXAMPLE: Tools for participatory analysis



Women participating in climate change vulnerability and capacity analysis in Dan Maza Idi community in Dakoro, Niger Awaisa Yahaya/ALP-CARE 2010

For its participatory analysis, ALP used participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools presented in CARE's Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA) Handbook (see references section for more information) as a starting point to guide the focus group discussions, which were designed to enable community groups to share their insights and develop a common understanding of the issues. The CVCA tools used included hazard mapping, seasonal calendars, historical timelines, vulnerability matrices and Venn Diagrams. These were complemented with other tools that explored the climate dimensions in more depth, for example the climate change analysis tools developed by Christian Aid, as well as other PRA tools such as risk and problem trees and participatory wealth ranking to explore the underlying causes of vulnerability. This analysis represented a significant investment of time by the CAAP facilitation team and the community participants, however it has proven to be very valuable in engaging communities and other stakeholders, informing planning and building ownership of the CAAP process.

STEP 4: DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY ADAPTATION ACTION PLANS

This iterative step is the core of the CAAP process. It involves agreement on a community-owned action plan, which identifies the priority adaptation actions for different community groups and the means by which they will be implemented. The plan development is informed by the participatory analysis and represents a next step in strengthening community adaptive capacity. As described in Step 5, these are 'living' plans, which will be adjusted and adapted in response to new information, learning and changes over time. The key activities for developing these plans include:

Community visioning: Conversations about climate change can be discouraging for communities, as they learn that increased risks and uncertainty will continue to challenge their livelihood security into the future. To orientate the planning towards locally specific and positive development, visioning processes encourage the participants to discuss their aspirations, view of the future and their hopes for their community, enabling them to think beyond immediate needs and concerns. Their vision statements are then used as a basis for discussing how they might realise them, how climate change impacts could affect this, and what can be done to minimise the negative effects. This frames the adaptation discussion in a positive and empowering way, rather than focusing only on problems and how to solve them.

Identification and prioritisation of proposed adaptation strategies: The identification of proposed adaptation strategies builds on the participatory analysis, engaging different community groups in dialogue on climate change impacts on livelihood strategies, existing coping mechanisms and adaptation strategies, and alternative strategies that align with their vision and will be more effective, sustainable and resilient over the longer term. When a list of options has been developed, community members prioritise the options based on agreed criteria, such as the potential to address multiple hazards or the benefits for particularly vulnerable groups.

Box 4. ALP PRACTICE EXAMPLE: Quick Win Activities

The CAAP process involves a number of different steps and requires a significant investment of time by the facilitation team and by local stakeholders. ALP's experience has demonstrated the importance of this iterative process for learning and capacity development, however it requires careful facilitation to maintain motivation throughout the steps. In most cases, a set of clear priorities emerge from the participatory analysis and/or the visioning process, providing an opportunity to support implementation of 'quick win' activities, which provide tangible benefits for communities and therefore incentivise participation in the following steps. Quick wins aim to be 'no regrets' activities, which strengthen resilience whether or not climate change impacts are experienced.

For example when ALP started working in Niger in 2011, it was evident from the CVCA analysis and CAAP planning process that communities were still recovering from the impacts of the severe drought from the year before. This limited people's ability to think past their immediate needs and consider future climate impacts. ALP distributed fast-maturing seeds as part of a quick win initiative to address people's immediate food security, whilst working with the community to help them understand the options for resilient livelihoods over the longer term.



A woman from Dan Maza Idi community standing in her cow pea harvest grown from seeds distributed by ALP that mature in 45 days. ALP/CARE Niger 2010.

Screening feasibility and implications of proposed adaptation strategies: The strategies proposed by the community are then screened by the CAAP facilitation team and community themselves to ensure that they are feasible, gender-responsive and climate-resilient:

- **Feasibility screening:** To be effective, adaptation strategies must be technically, financially, socially and environmentally feasible in the specific context where they will be implemented. With community groups and inputs from relevant technical experts, a feasibility screening is conducted for the proposed strategies to determine which have the most potential, the risks involved in implementation and which may require complementary activities or additional support. If barriers to feasibility cannot be overcome, the strategy is removed from the list of options and advocacy actions are initiated for state or other institutions to deal with the barriers that are beyond the capacity of the community members.
- **Gender screening:** To ensure that the CAAP is gender-responsive, community members evaluate who will benefit from the proposed strategies, the impacts on work burden for women and men and whether the strategies promote more equitable access to productive resources and their benefits. This enables assessment of whether the strategies have a positive, negative or neutral effect on progress towards gender equality, informed by the gender analysis conducted in the previous step. Those strategies that potentially have a negative effect are not taken forward.
- **Climate screening:** Communities may identify strategies that address their immediate needs and priorities, without taking climate change into account. To ensure the plan is climate-resilient and avoid maladaptation, the proposed strategies are reviewed against observed climate trends, climate change projections as available, and potential future scenarios. This ensures that they are resilient to projected hazards, make sense in light of expected changes in temperature and rainfall patterns, and make the maximum contribution to reducing people's vulnerability to climate change. This often results in adjustments to strategies or new ideas and demonstrates the value of flexibility in plans.

Through these screenings, a short list of adaptation strategies is developed, along with ideas for complementary activities and external resources or technical support required.

Identification of complementary actions: Community-led processes tend to yield actions that focus on strengthening livelihoods, such as drought-resistant seeds and rainwater harvesting. To promote a more holistic approach, in this step the CAAP facilitation team supports community members to identify complementary actions that address different dimensions of vulnerability to climate change and stimulate progress towards their vision for the future. This may include disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities, capacity development or advocacy actions to address underlying causes of vulnerability that are beyond community control and which impact on their ability to adapt. This aids in identifying the systems and institutions that may require strengthening to enable CBA in **Step 7**.

Decisions on organisation, roles and responsibilities: With a list of agreed actions, communities are ready to decide how their priority activities will be implemented. With support from the facilitation team, the community identifies the resources and mechanisms needed to put the adaptation actions in place, as well as decisions on the roles and responsibilities of different actors (including the community members themselves as well as government, civil society and private sector institutions that will support implementation of activities).

Finalisation and validation of Community Adaptation Action Plans: The finalised list of community-identified adaptation strategies and complementary activities is organised into an action plan format, with timelines and milestones or indicators to enable monitoring (see page 15 for an example). The final plan is validated in a community meeting, documented and shared with all relevant stakeholders. The means of documenting and sharing the plan must be tailored to the particular context, ensuring that it is accessible to all members of the community, including the most vulnerable women and men and those who are illiterate.

STEP 4 RESULTS:

- Community Adaptation Action Plans agreed, documented and accessible to all community members

Box 5. ALP PRACTICE EXAMPLE: Sharing Community Adaptation Action Plans

In Niger, where illiteracy levels are high, ALP has used a creative approach to ensure that all community members can access and understand the Community Adaptation Action Plan. The CAAP facilitation team worked with community members to develop a set of symbols that represent different elements of the plan. The action plan is posted in the community in a place where all can view it and the pictorial version ensures that all community members, even those who are illiterate, can understand it.



Dan Maza Idi CAAP uses symbols to illustrate the different activities in the plan. Credit: Harouna Hama/CARE-ALP 2013

Example extract from Zambulugu CAAP, Ghana

Strategy	Activities	Time frame Start/Finish	Lead Responsibility	Main Collaborators	Resources Internal/External	Sources of Funding
Engage in Dry Season Farming	Acquisition of land closer to water bodies	Sep - Nov, 2013	Community Monitors	Traditional authority	Land	Community
	Provision of seeds/seedlings	Nov, 2013 - Jan, 2014	Community Monitors	MOFA, PAS-G, SADA	seeds/seedlings	ALP and NGOs
	Acquisition of farm tools	Oct, 2013 - Jan, 2014	Community Monitors, PARED	MOFA, PAS-G, ALP	Garden forks, scythes, rakes	ALP and NGOs
Promoting and improving livestock for sale	Acquire land, pens and fences	Feb - May, 2013	Community Monitors and farmers	Traditional Authority, Assembly man and MOFA	Labour, water and sand	Community
	Purchasing of livestock for rearing purposes	April - Jun, 2013	Community Monitors and farmers	Assembly man, MOFA and SADA	Exotic breeds of animals	ALP
	Animal husbandry training	Feb, 2013 - Jan, 2014	Community Monitors	MOFA, PARED	Technical expertise	ALP
Adopt recommended farming practices	Sensitization of Farmer groups on modern farming technology	May, 2013	Community Monitors, PARED	MOFA		
	Demonstration of climate resilient technology	May - October, 2013	Community Monitors and farmers	MOFA, PAS-G, PARED	Land, labour and farm tools Fertiliser, chemicals	ALP
Disaster risk reduction activities	Formation and training of fire volunteer groups	Nov, 2013 - Jan, 2014	Community Monitors and Fire Volunteer groups	NADMO, GNFS,EPA, Traditional authority	Wellington boots, scythes, whistles, backpack sprayers	ALP, other NGOs
	Establish community woodland and growing of economic trees	2013 - 2104	Community Monitors	PARED, MOFA	Land, labour Improved tree seedlings	ALP
Advocate for socio-economic services from government, NGOs and DAs	Formation of CBOs and FBOs in communities	Ongoing	Community Monitors and Community Members	PARED, MOFA and PAS-G		Community
	Build/train CBOs and FBOs on advocacy skills	March, 2013	PARED	NGOs, NADMO, community monitors	Flip charts, resource personnel	ALP
	Engage Stakeholders and service providers	2013 - 2014	Community members, CBOs, and FBOs	NGOs, MOFA, NADMO, GHS		
Promote innovative credit system	Formation of groups	Ongoing	Community Monitors and farmers	PARED		Community
	Link groups to financial institutions	2013 - 2014	PARED	Financial institutions		ALP
Promoting community literacy education	Lobby DAs to support literacy classes	Ongoing	Community members and Monitors	NFED, DAs, and other NGOs		
	Recruiting and training of functional literacy facilitators	2013 - 2014	PARED and Community Monitors	DA, School for Life		ALP Team, PARED and community

STEP 5: IMPLEMENTATION AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY ADAPTATION ACTION PLANS

Once the action plans are agreed, communities are ready to start implementation. Because adaptation is about managing risks, changes and uncertainty, Community Adaptation Action Plans cannot be viewed as static instruments. For sustainable results and to build community adaptive capacity over time, plans and strategies must be reviewed and adjusted on a regular basis, taking into account lessons learned, changes in context and new information. The key activities at this stage are:

Capacity building for communities: In most cases, there will be a need for some capacity building for communities to implement the planned adaptation actions. This may include development of organisational capacity of CBOs and support for information access, interpretation and application, as well as technical knowledge and skills in relation to adaptation strategies. This is most effectively achieved by linking communities with technical experts in local government ministries, research institutes or development organisations that have the required knowledge and skills.

Implementation of planned adaptation actions: Implementation of adaptation actions may occur individually or collectively. Generally speaking, some actions in the plan can be undertaken independently by community members with locally available resources. This includes, for example, group savings and loans systems, use of drought-tolerant crops and community cereal banking. Other actions, including those related to public goods and services, will require external technical and financial support, for example development of water supply or irrigation infrastructure, establishment and strengthening of early warning systems or services related to value chain engagement. It is beyond the scope of a CAAP to plan to resolve entrenched issues, such as land tenure rights, illiteracy or inequitable access to resources, which may prevent successful realisation of adaptation plans and visions, but communities may include advocacy actions, conducted through linkages with CBOs or civil society networks.

Community monitoring, review and adjustment of plans: It is important that communities regularly reflect on progress and review and adjust plans and strategies based on new information, experiences and changes in context, as well as climate information such as short range and seasonal forecasts and climate projections. In practice, this generally involves a seasonal or annual review of the plans in line with what has been learned in the previous period. This may lead to changes in priority for particular strategies, adjustment of strategies to increase their effectiveness and/or better respond to climate impacts or forecasts and, potentially, the inclusion of new strategies in the plans. This adaptive management approach enables communities to anticipate and flexibly respond to risks and changes over time, thereby building their adaptive capacity.

Climate information to support decision-making: The CAAP process provides broad directions for community-level adaptation, identifying strategies that will enable people to better manage risks and adapt over time. In acting on these plans, people are in an ongoing process of decision-making about how and when to invest their resources in different strategies. It is critically important to ensure that people have the information and tools they need to make these decisions in an informed and forward-looking way. In the case of CBA, this particularly means access to and interpretation and use of climate information. Processes such as Participatory Scenario Planning (see reference section for more detail) have proven successful in supporting adaptive decision-making by communities by providing them with access to seasonal forecast and early warning information.

STEP 5 RESULTS:

- Adaptation actions implemented
- Progress reports on implementation of Community Adaptation Action Plans
- Monitoring and adjustments to Community Adaptation Action Plans
- Livelihood decisions informed by climate information

Box 6. ALP PRACTICE EXAMPLE: Community monitors



Zambulugu Community Monitor meeting with the community credit: ALP/CARE, 2012

In Ghana, monitoring of Community Adaptation Action Plan implementation is undertaken by community monitors, who have received training from the program. The community monitors have a mandate from the community to monitor implementation of planned adaptation actions, as well as other indicators (such as rainfall, where rain gauges have been installed). They facilitate ongoing learning by community members, through community reflection meetings and review of CAAPs, leading to adjustment of plans and more informed livelihood decision-making.

STEP 6: INTEGRATION OF COMMUNITY PRIORITIES IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Allocation of resources for action at the local level is often driven by local development planning processes. These processes therefore represent an important entry point for integrating the CAAP priorities, to build sustainability and ensure that the needed resources are available to support and complement community actions. The specific activities will vary based on the government structures and planning processes, however they are likely to include:

Presentation of Community Adaptation Action Plans to local government institutions: Ideally, local government representatives will have been involved in the previous steps, however it is still important to share the plan with them to secure their commitment to supporting community action and integrating the community priorities in their own plans and budgets. Depending on the structure, there may be a need to work with government representatives at multiple levels to ensure that resources are allocated to support implementation of Community Adaptation Action Plans.

Box 7. ALP PRACTICE EXAMPLE: Getting government buy-in for community plans



Women from Dan Maza Idi community in Dakoro, Niger presenting their CAAP Credit: Harouna Hama/CARE-ALP 2013

Presentation of CAAPs to local government authority by community representatives is a ceremonial and symbolic demand of accountability by community members from duty bearers in their government. It demonstrates the level at which communities are living up to their responsibilities of facilitating self-help development, and exacting more responsiveness from local government. The ceremonial handing over of the CAAP to the local government authority by the citizens establishes the basis for advocacy and subsequent community engagement with the institutions since the CAAP is expected to be source document for integrating CBA strategies into the local government plans and budgets.

Integration of community adaptation priorities in local development plans and budgets: Communities with an action plan are well-placed to participate in local development planning processes, bringing forward their priorities and requesting the needed resources and support from local government institutions. Representatives selected by the community can be supported by the CAAP facilitation team to participate in processes such as public hearings on draft local government plans, and report back to their communities on the results. This strengthens the linkages between communities and their local representatives, increasing the likelihood that relevant technical support and financial resources will be made available to communities to implement their planned adaptation actions.

STEP 6 RESULTS:

- Local development plans with community adaptation priorities integrated
- Increased support from local government institutions for community adaptation actions

Box 8. ALP PRACTICE EXAMPLE: Integrating community priorities in district plans

The ALP Ghana team has been successful in supporting integration of priorities emerging from CAAP processes in the development plans for Garu Tempane and East Mamprusi districts. Government officials were involved in facilitating the participatory analysis process with communities in their districts, which enabled them to better understand the climate change issues facing women and men in their constituencies. Once the Community Adaptation Action Plans were developed, the community leaders presented them to the District Assemblies in a public forum, making them accountable for considering them in the district plans. In addition to promoting climate-resilient planning in these two districts, this has led to revision of the national planning guidelines for all districts to include climate change issues. In addition, relationships and communication between communities and their local government service providers have improved.



Presentation of Jawani CAAP to East Mamprusi District Assembly Credit: ALP/CARE Ghana 2013

STEP 7: STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS FOR CBA

To maximize the potential for success in CBA efforts, investment may be required in strengthening the systems and institutions that can provide access to information, technical assistance and resources for adaptation actions. This may include:

Capacity building on climate change adaptation for local institutions: Local institutions may have limited understanding of climate change, the national and international climate change policy context and adaptation processes and how these relate to their existing work, which creates a barrier for communities in taking action on CBA. Targeted training may be needed for key actors to develop the knowledge they need to facilitate community actions and develop linkages between communities and systems, services and decision-makers at higher levels.

Promoting participatory planning processes: The previous step assumes that there is space in local development planning processes for community participation. Depending on the context, this may or may not be the reality. The CAAP facilitation team may need to do some preparatory work to convince local government planners that there is value in having communities participate and to create the right opportunities for this to occur. As community capacity increases and local government institutions recognise the value of participatory planning, they take increasing responsibility for facilitating participatory processes as an integral part of planning.

Strengthening/institutionalising climate information services and disaster risk management (DRM) systems: Climate information is a critical input to adaptation processes, including longer-term climate projections and shorter-term information such as seasonal forecasts, early warnings for climate extremes, short-range weather forecasts and local rainfall records. In some contexts, access to this information is difficult, due to lack of availability, poor communication systems or political barriers to access for local stakeholders. To overcome this, partnerships with meteorological services, DRM structures and other actors that are generating, interpreting and communicating climate information are critical to strengthen both availability of and access to climate information for decision-making. Engaging with disaster response mechanisms may also be important to ensure appropriate information sharing and timely action when a crisis occurs.

Linking with existing community-based systems: Most communities have systems already in place to support local development and livelihoods, such as market information systems and savings and loan services. These systems represent an important entry point for adaptation action, but may require adjustment or strengthening for optimal results. Sustainability of adaptation processes will be increased if linkages are created with existing systems and structures.

STEP 7 RESULTS:

- Local institutions with increased capacity on climate change adaptation and its relation to other disciplines
- More responsive, coordinated and accountable local governance processes
- Strengthened climate information services, DRM systems and community-based systems

Box 9. ALP PRACTICE EXAMPLE: Community vulnerability monitoring systems



Dela Jari Community Early Warning Volunteer reading the rain gauge in Aman Bader village, Niger Credit: Agnes Otzelberger 2015

In Niger, ALP has been instrumental in establishing and strengthening community vulnerability monitoring systems (SCAP/RU). Each community selects a committee of people responsible for monitoring four key livelihood areas, in addition to information on the climate situation using localised standard indicators such as availability and price of cereals, timing and amount of rainfall, crop production and occurrence of crop pests. There are four levels of alert (normal, warning, alarm and emergency), which they determine depending on the severity of the information received and the effectiveness of current coping strategies. This information is used to inform community decision-making and to trigger community contingency plans developed with the support of ALP, as well as to feed into higher-level early warning systems. For example,

in 2012, pest outbreaks in Niger threatened crop harvests but thanks to information reported by the SCRAP/RU's through the Early Warning System (EWS), the Government had enough time to take action to control the outbreaks minimising losses.

The project has also supported the introduction of community rain gauges in 20 communities in Dakoro to add to the local information base. Farmers are able to access information on the amount of rainfall received immediately after the rains occur and this has given them confidence in the decision to plant or not, thus resulting to a reduction of the rate of seed loss due to multiple replanting following insufficient rain.



Community monitor of Baadare (Soly Tagris Commune) in Dakoro, Niger presenting the CAAP. Credit: Harouna Hama/CARE-ALP 2013

Challenges and Success Factors in Facilitating CAAP Processes

The learning generated through the ALP CAAP processes in Ghana and Niger has contributed to the refinement and further elaboration of the approach presented here. A few key challenges and factors contributing to success in overcoming them are summarised below.

ENSURING INCLUSIVE ANALYSIS AND PLANNING PROCESSES

In participatory processes, there is always a risk that some voices will be heard while others are left out. As it is often the most vulnerable people who are excluded, it is important to find ways to ensure that CAAP processes reflect the needs and priorities of all groups within the community. Group-based analysis and action planning involves separate dialogue processes with different groups, allowing identification of different priorities that are then shared and harmonised at community level in the Community Adaptation Action Plan. This ensures that all groups, including women and socially marginalised groups have a voice in the process.

COMMUNICATING COMPLEX ISSUES

It can be difficult to communicate the concepts of climate change and adaptation in ways that are accessible and understood by community members, particularly in contexts where literacy levels are low. To overcome this requires strong communications skills and creative approaches to facilitation and documentation to ensure that all participants understand and are able to actively participate in CAAP processes. Often, CAAP facilitation teams are more effective when they involve community representatives. Many villages have community-based animators, monitors or extension agents that can bring valuable knowledge, skills and networks to the team and help to bridge any communication gaps that arise.

HARMONISING ADAPTATION ACTIONS ACROSS COMMUNITIES

Adaptation actions in one community may have implications for the adaptive capacity of a neighbouring community, for example when expansion of crop production in a farming community affects water access for nearby livestock herders. Sharing and harmonisation of Community Adaptation Action Plans among communities within a locality or government administrative unit helps to avoid negative impacts and can stimulate cross-community learning and collaboration. There are inevitable trade-offs in adaptation decision-making and these can be better navigated when communities are working together. Government and civil society actors present in multiple communities can play an important role in facilitating coordinated action across communities.

SUPPORTING FORWARD-LOOKING DECISION-MAKING

The CAAP process is designed to provide communities with practical tools and skills that enable forward-looking decision-making. However, for vulnerable women and men, planning for the future can be very difficult as the challenge of meeting immediate needs takes up significant time and energy and they face multiple risks and uncertainties. This will remain a challenge, however linkages with climate information services have been found to make an important difference by making information easily accessible, for example through community-based monitoring systems such as rain gauge recording, and dissemination of information through mobile phone services. This removes one important barrier to adaptation over the longer term. However, it does not guarantee usage of the information by all community members – better targeted interventions are required to reach the most vulnerable and those who are illiterate.

ADDRESSING UNDERLYING CAUSES OF VULNERABILITY TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The CAAP process brings to the surface many issues that are not directly related to climate change, such as expectations that derive from such exercises that need to be carefully managed, as well as issues that have major implications for people's ability to respond. Consequently, advocacy is a critical dimension of CBA, at local level to overcome barriers to implementation of community adaptation actions and at national level to ensure that policies and allocation of resources support CBA. At the local level, progress on issues such as land tenure and natural resource access rights may be required to enable adaptation actions to be effective. At the national level, governments are in the process of developing and implementing their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), which will have a significant influence over the resources available for adaptation at the local level. Sectoral policies (such as water, agriculture, disaster risk reduction) may also represent important entry points for integrating CBA approaches and lessons.

ACHIEVING SCALE AND SUSTAINABILITY

As is the case with all community-based development processes, achieving scale and sustainability of CAAP processes is a challenge. Integrating CAAP into existing local planning processes, particularly those that drive allocation of resources for implementation, is an important strategy for ensuring that communities have support for adaptation over the longer term. Scale up of CBA requires engagement at higher levels, including advocacy as described above. For CAAP specifically, guidelines for local planning represent a useful entry point to facilitate broader roll out of the CAAP process. However, the ability of local governments to undertake genuine participatory planning and support community actions is often limited, even where community planning is built into the system, requiring NGOs and CBOs to play a role in this process. Targeted efforts are needed to develop local capacity, make space for community participation in planning processes and ensure appropriate allocation of resources for adaptation within existing planning and budgeting processes. There may be a need to develop systems that enable synthesis and prioritisation of community plans at relevant levels in the local government structure.

ACCESSING RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF COMMUNITY ADAPTATION ACTIONS

Following from the above point, one of the major barriers faced by local actors is access to financing for adaptation. Integration into local planning processes may result in some resources being made available, however many local governments struggle to cover the costs of basic services and development priorities, making any additional costs associated with integrating adaptation even more difficult to incorporate in budgets. The financing mechanisms set up to support adaptation efforts must be flexible and responsive to local decisions, enabling flow of funds to local governments and communities to take the actions they have prioritised through adaptation planning processes. Depending on the context, this may include investment in 'public goods' such as infrastructure, service delivery (for example climate information and agricultural extension services) or support for community-led actions.

Last Words and Looking Ahead

The CAAP process builds on existing good practices for participatory community based planning, but places a focus on integrating local knowledge of climate change with scientific information on future trends. Community empowerment, ownership and equality are strengthened through the CAAP process. These are fundamental to realising sustainable adaptation which is inclusive of the most vulnerable people. The CAAP process is therefore a flexible and future-orientated approach to planning. It helps communities to make better informed and equitable livelihood choices on an ongoing basis that anticipate and respond to risks and changes. The adaptive capacity developed through the CAAP process improves local governance and enables a dynamic response to current and future climate risks at the local level, ultimately delivering climate resilient development.

Climate investments become directly relevant to local needs and interests when using the CAAP process. By focusing on locally owned decisions and actions and helping to avoid maladaptation or irrelevance of investments, CAAPs represent “value for money”. With inclusion of CAAPs as a critical element, community based adaptation as a whole has been shown to be cost effective economically, socially and environmentally with positive cost benefit ratios under almost all potential climate scenarios, including when the climate is favourable.

If the mechanisms for delivery are designed appropriately, the emerging sources of adaptation finance, such as the Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund, represent an important opportunity to support community-level planning and action, as well as to strengthen systems and institutions to enable CBA over time. Equally, CAAPs enable investment from government development budgets and bilateral donor programmes. Coordinated efforts are essential for integrating adaptation into development planning and programs so as to ensure that development is locally determined, climate-resilient, strengthens local adaptive capacity and incorporates risk management. The learning from CAAP processes provides important evidence to inform these efforts.

Further Reading and References

The content of this brief is complemented by two practical process guides, which provide comprehensive overviews of the CBA planning processes facilitated by ALP in Ghana and Niger. These and other ALP documents can be accessed at:

<http://www.careclimatechange.org/adaptation-initiatives/alp>

For more information on CBA approaches, please see:

ALP (2014). Facing uncertainty: The value of climate information for adaptation, risk reduction and resilience in Africa. http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/Facing_Uncertainty_ALP_Climate_Communications_Brief.pdf

ALP (2013). Community Based Adaptation: An empowering approach for climate resilient development and risk reduction. http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/CBA_Brief_nov_13.pdf

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ALP (2011). Gender in the Adaptation Learning Programme for Africa. http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/adaptation/ALP_Gender_2011.pdf

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Issue 9: Why mainstreaming gender into community-based climate change adaptation is a priority.

Issue 11: Community-Based Adaptation: Experiences from Africa.

Issue 12: Climate Communication for Adaptation.

Issue 13: Integrating community-based adaptation into local government planning.

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CARE (2009). Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis Handbook. <http://www.careclimatechange.org/cvca>

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CARE (2011). Understanding Vulnerability to Climate Change: Insights from Application of CARE's Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA) Methodology. www.careclimatechange.org/files/adaptation/CARE_Understanding_Vulnerability.pdf

CARE (2011) The Visioning Approach in Community Watershed Management Planning http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/CARE_docs/CARE_VN_Visioning_Document.pdf



The Adaptation Learning Program (ALP) for Africa aims to increase the capacity of vulnerable households in sub-Saharan Africa to adapt to climate change and climate variability. Since 2010, ALP has been working with communities, government institutions and civil society organisations in Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique and Niger to ensure that community-based adaptation approaches and actions are integrated in development policies and programmes. This is achieved through the demonstration and dissemination of innovative approaches for CBA, supported by practical tools, methodologies and evidence of impact. ALP is also working to create an enabling environment for CBA by working with civil society groups to influence national and international policy frameworks and financing mechanisms for adaptation.

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