



GENDER AND COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTATION IN AFRICA

**Gender and Community-based Adaptation Learning Workshop
organised by the Adaptation Learning Programme for Africa**

22-25 August 2011, Ex Tee Chrystal Hotel, Bolgatanga, Ghana

Introduction

Over 40 participants from 12 organisations and institutions working on climate change adaptation in Africa participated in a learning workshop on Gender and Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) in Ghana. The event was organized and supported by the Adaptation Learning Programme in Africa (ALP), implemented by CARE International in Mozambique, Kenya, Niger, Ghana, and brought together gender and climate change practitioners from these four countries, France, Denmark, Austria and Morocco.

Through the workshop and community visits to Farfar, Saamini, Zambulgu and Kugri communities in Northern and Upper East regions, the participants deliberated on the gender related issues that impact on successful adaptation to climate change and the methods available for mainstreaming gender into CBA.

Key points for CBA practitioners to take into account:

1. Social differences relating to gender are “learned, and though deeply rooted in every culture, are changeable over a lifetime or generations, and have wide variations both within and between cultures. Gender, along with other factors such as wealth and ethnicity, often determines the rights, roles, opportunities, power,

access to and control over resources for women and men in any culture.” Striving for gender equality “does not mean that women, girls, men and boys are the same but that their enjoyment of these rights, opportunities and life-chances are not governed or limited by whether they were born female or male.”¹

2. In addition to the power dynamics between men and women, girls and boys, there is a need to further identify and understand the dynamics among women, among men and the positive and negative contributions of both men and women with regard to gender equality and equity.

3. Climate change impacts are causing new changes and shifts in gender roles and power relations to emerge which add to the varied and continually changing political, economic and socio-cultural contexts that contribute to differential vulnerabilities to women, men, girls and boys.

4. Effective and long-term community based adaptation must be based on a good understanding of and commitment to working with:

- existing community structures,
- the complexity of each local gender context;
- differential vulnerabilities, capacities and assets of women and men, girls and boys at different stages in their lives in the face of climate change and
- mainstreaming gender in the goals, outputs, activities, indicators and budgets of CBA projects.

5. Gender and climate change adaptation are cross cutting issues that cannot be addressed in isolation. In order to mainstream gender equality into CBA processes, practitioners have to build on sound development practices and existing methodological resources.

6. Inclusive and meaningful participation of all community groups, particularly the most vulnerable, is needed in all the phases of the CBA project (from assessment to implementation, monitoring and evaluation). This fosters women’s and men’s empowerment and ownership which is vital to positive and sustainable adaptation and development.

7. Because women are often more vulnerable and marginalized, it is vital for gender and CBA practitioners to value women’s contributions and capacities, as well as support their access to knowledge, build their capacity and their equitable involvement in CBA governance. This will enhance their responsibility, leadership and self-confidence, positively contribute to their adaptive capacity and reduce women’s vulnerability to climate change.

¹ CARE International (2009) Gender Policy. <http://pgdl.care.org/gendertoolkit>

For effective integration of gender in CBA, the Learning Workshop participants recommend that CBA projects:

- 8. Conduct gender and power analysis *prior to adaptation planning*** to ensure knowledge of the existing different but complementary knowledge, skills, power relations and capacities among and between men and women.
- 9. Include in the analysis an understanding of the drivers of change** in gender roles and relations - how power dynamics are shifting due to the pressures and stresses of climate change and other factors over time.
- 10. Ensure that gender is mainstreamed at all stages of the CBA project cycle.** Community-based adaptation methods and tools should be tailored to the local context and climate information to ensure they respond to gender dynamics, and the dynamic realities of change, risk and uncertainty.
- 11. Monitor and document gender achievements** in CBA projects to generate critical knowledge and evidence, which can be used to advocate for and contribute to an enabling environment for gender CBA policy at community, local, national and global levels.
- 12. Recognise that gender is about power relations** and, thus, monitor and evaluate gender dynamics not only in absolute terms (numbers of female/ male beneficiaries) or in isolation (impacts on men versus impacts on women), but in relative terms (increases or decreases in gender gaps, changes in gender relations)
- 13. Include gender-sensitive CBA strategies in policies and programs** at local, national and global levels.
- 14. Internally assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices** related to gender within CBA organizations and networks for successful implementation of community based adaptation.
- 15. Develop capacity building programmes** which emphasise the vision, value and importance of gender-sensitive CBA, including adaptive capacity building which is responsive to the continuously changing and unpredictable context of climate change, and includes practical guidelines and methods for analysis and mainstreaming.

For more information and workshop products see CARE International Climate Change at www.careclimatechange.org; and ALIN JotoAfrica at jotoafrica@alin.net or Adaptation Learning Programme for Africa at, alp@careclimatechange.org

Vote of thanks

The organizers and participants at the just ended learning event would like to extend their sincere appreciation to the Chief of the Bolgatanga Traditional Area, Naaba Martin Abilba III for his warm welcome to the gender and CBA practitioners in his traditional area and especially for chairing the opening ceremony. Special thanks to The Honorable Regional Minister of Upper East Region (Hon. Mark Woyongo) for officially opening the Gender and CBA learning event and for delivering the key note address. To the chiefs, elders, leaders and people of Kugri, Farfar, Zambulgu and Saamini, we say a big thank you for hosting the various guests and sharing your experiences on gender and climate change issues as it pertains in the various localities.

To Fiona Percy, the Regional ALP Programme Coordinator, Philip Christensen, the CARE Ghana Country Director, the ALP Ghana team, and the three workshop facilitators: Ruth Mitei (ALP Learning, Gender and Governance Advisor), Agnes Otzelberger (Climate Change and Food Security Advisor, CARE Austria) and Tine Rossing (Global Coordinator – Climate Adaptation, CARE International - PECCN), thank you for leading the workshop to a success. Sincere gratitude goes to the following resource persons: Marie Monimart (IIED International Fellow); Anne-France Wittmann (Programme Manager UNDP-GEF, Community Based Adaptation Programme in Morocco / UN Volunteer,) and to the Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN) for documenting the workshop products.

