

Case Study 8 - Climate analogues

“*Climate Analogues: Finding Tomorrow’s Agriculture Today*” is an effort by CCAFS to make climate change adaptation a more tangible endeavour by encouraging the exchange of knowledge between communities. The idea is that the “analogues tool” helps to identify geographic areas where growing conditions today mirror future climates. Then to promote exchanges between the communities living in these areas so that learning can take place on agriculture practices that work well in those “future” climates and encourage discussion on how these practices can be adapted to local context to cope with potentially dramatic shifts in growing conditions over time.

Lead institution: CIAT and CCAFS

CIAT is an agricultural research institution. It focus on scientific solutions to hunger in the tropics, believing that eco-efficient agriculture—developing sustainable methods of food production—is the best way to eradicate hunger and improve livelihoods in the region. CIAT is also about partnerships and works together with likeminded organizations to enhance impact.

Climate communication aims

The communications aims are to promote learning by interacting with peer groups and “seeing” what works. Dialogue how adaptive strategies can be used in the local context are also facilitated.

Fit with categorical considerations for climate communication (see Table 1)

Inform and educate individuals about climate change - inform on science (including level of consensus and magnitude of the problem); inform on causes; inform on current and potential impacts; Inform on possible solutions

Achieve some type and level of social engagement/action - encourage action/behaviour that encourages ‘forward-learning’/adaptation; Encourage action which helps people to adapt or reduce their vulnerability and/or exposure

Bring about changes in social norms and cultural values - influencing values through early education; influencing values through pervasive modelling; influencing on climate “smart” or “resilient” thinking/planning

Communications/social learning characteristics

Initially developed as a software tool (now with a web version), the idea is to make climate change more tangible by comparing similar geographic areas to those where a particular user lives and to demonstrate what their situation might look like in 30 years. Although an innovative idea, this is a top down information supply mechanism. In 2012, climate analogues plans to launch a second phase, where farmer exchanges are conducted between geographic locations. The goal is to build an inventory of local knowledge from around the world for regions that face similar challenges, and for those who take part in visit exchanges to learn and understand what adaptation options might be possible for them to adopt. If successful this has potential to develop into more of a triple loop social learning exercise where farmers learn

from each other, implement changes and this in turn affects how exchanges and the “analogue tools” themselves are re-designed – bringing in local knowledge.

Linear/Looped scorecard: 2/3

Audience

Policy makers, farmers and other local stakeholders in particular areas are they key targets.

Getting research into use (how this case study does or does not contribute to that)

This is a good example of a project with potential. Research has started off in relative isolation and it has been recognised that it needs to be brought closer to target audiences. This has initially been done in a fairly top down and linear way, but there is potential for this to change with the forthcoming farmer exchanges.

Evolution of the project (how has the project evolved or developed if known)

The web-based tool was first released in 2011, and the exchanges are planned for 2012.

Challenges and questions

- How to ensure that the following claims of the project “that the analogues tool is rooted in the basic notion that for centuries farmers have been innovating and adapting in response to shifting conditions, providing a rich source of information on how agricultural systems can adapt to climate change” is reflected in the way the tool evolves itself – i.e. continuing to build on that local knowledge and building strong social learning into the tool and process.
- Follow up after the knowledge exchange, what processes are in place to assist farmers in implementing new adaptation options, how can behaviour change being tracked to see if this process is really useful?
- Exchange visits are resource intensive. How can this be replicated across large areas? What level of exchange is necessary? What added value do they bring?

Take aways

This project offers some very interesting opportunities for exploring social learning. The models provide a good basis for discussion and shared development of ideas.

CCAFS theme: This initiative fits broadly under themes 1 and 2.

Links

Description of climate analogues <http://gismap.ciat.cgiar.org/Analogues/>

Information on the tool http://dapa.ciat.cgiar.org/climate-analogues-tool-released/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter