Organizational and Institutional Responses to Climate Change

Insights from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Mali

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RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE PLACES NEW DEMANDS ON GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES, REQUIRING THEM to work more effectively and to reform their existing structures and practices. At the same time, National Adaptation Programs of Action (NAPAs) and funding for climate change initiatives are providing greater opportunities for institutional, organizational, and human capacity strengthening. While a growing body of literature focuses on risk mitigation approaches and adaptation measures in various countries, little is known about the capacity of local institutions and organizations to manage their collective responses to climate change. This policy note summarizes research exploring the challenges and opportunities associated with building human, organizational, and institutional capacity to respond effectively to the adverse impacts of climate change as they relate to agriculture and rural livelihoods in developing countries. The findings offer insights into levels of awareness, practices, and organizational and institutional issues based on interviews with practitioners involved in climate change adaptation in government agencies, local and international organizations, and think tanks in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Mali.

STUDY CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

The research involved the collection of data through a survey of 87 practitioners in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Mali, adopting a "knowledge–attitude–practices" methodology, commonly used to develop understanding of the knowledge, capacity, activities, and perceptions of individuals and members of organizations or communities. An e-survey questionnaire focused on six areas of interest: (1) each organization's climate change–related activities, (2) factors considered in climate change–related initiatives, (3) perceptions of factors affecting the success of climate change–adaptation initiatives, (4) current skill sets and training needed on gender and climate change adaptation, (5) interactions and linkages, and (6) organizational issues. Face-to-face interviews were subsequently conducted, at which time organizations were categorized as government agencies; universities and research institutes; nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, including private companies and foundations; and international organizations. Respondents were asked to rate a predetermined set of indicators on a scale of 0 (not important) to 5 (very important). They were then asked to rate the actual emphasis their organizations gave each of these indicators. Further details can be found in Ragasa et al. 2013 (see *For Further Reading*).

GAPS BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL AWARENESS AND PRACTICE IN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PROJECTS

The Design Stage. Elements related to project design were rated important or highly important by a majority of respondents in all four countries, indicating strong awareness of the key elements and considerations needed for designing and planning successful climate change activities. These are encouraging results, suggesting active discussions of the importance of key elements during development of NAPAs and other climate change strategies in those countries. A few organizations placed less importance on some of the key elements generally thought to be crucial for the successful design of climate change projects—such as acceptability of the activity to target groups, financial sustainability, environmental considerations, and gender issues—suggesting the need to strengthen awareness of these factors among

organizations. Likewise, some respondents' low emphasis on the importance of markets, profitability, and financial sustainability demonstrates the need to raise awareness of the effects of these factors on poor people and the need to incorporate strategies for income generation, livelihood diversification, and increasing market access into climate change adaptation projects. Despite strong awareness and recognition of the importance of various design considerations, many organizations do not integrate these considerations into their actual practices. Respondents reported that not much attention was given to the financial sustainability of climate change–related activities in their organizations, reflecting the heavy dependence on ad hoc and short-term projects; financial sustainability was rarely achieved beyond the period of project funding.

The Targeting Stage. Although most organizations said they employed vulnerability assessment, few specified the strategy used. Most reported using groups or organizations as their beneficiaries or partners, including cooperatives, farmers' organizations, farmer field schools, self-help groups, watershed associations, water user associations, and associations in general. The most consistently cited targeting criteria in the four countries were risk of drought or other extreme events; existence of hunger, food insecurity, or nutrition status; and poverty. Of the respondents in Bangladesh, 30–50 percent reported their organizations paid less attention to market access; the presence and capacity of service providers (extension, credit, and inputs); and hunger, food security, and nutrition criteria than they deemed appropriate, while 20 percent indicated that their organizations should pay more attention to drought risk, access to land, and political stability.

The Implementation Stage. The majority of respondents rated all the elements of project implementation as important or very important. The factors considered most important were acceptability of the project within the target community, availability of local groups within targeted communities to take on implementation, and active participation of target beneficiaries and intended users. All respondents in Ethiopia and Mali rated increasing participation of women in the project as very important.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Stage. The majority of respondents rated monitoring and evaluation (M&E) indicators as important or very important. The most highly rated factors were active participation by intended beneficiaries and measures of environmental sustainability. Factors rated as not important were changes in household income, changes in access to services and information, and changes in the productivity of plots. In Bangladesh and Ethiopia, one striking observation was that for almost all of the factors related to M&E, there was a large gap between what the respondents considered important and the actual practices within their organizations. All respondents in Kenya reported that their organizations placed less emphasis on strengthening social networks than was needed. In Mali, many respondents suggested that their organizations should pay greater attention to promoting active participation of beneficiaries in M&E and to tracking changes in food security.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND TRAINING ISSUES

Institutional Issues: All of the sample organizations had a clear idea of their mandates, but not all of them had an articulated strategy. While all the study countries had implemented or were in the process of initiating a NAPA, the sample organizations seemed to lack clear and measurable climate change targets or an M&E system to collect data and report on achievements. Responses indicated that many of the sample organizations, especially in Ethiopia and Mali, lacked adequate physical and financial resources to carry out their mandates. Some organizations also faced significant human resource capacity constraints.

Knowledge and Skills Gaps. The level of skills in and knowledge of climate change adaptation analysis, project design, implementation, and M&E vary across organizations and countries. Several respondents in Bangladesh reported having limited understanding of gender differentials in climate change impacts and adaptation and of how to engage policymakers and decisionmakers. In Ethiopia and Kenya, several respondents reported a lack of skills related to M&E of climate change projects, such as measuring indicators on inclusiveness and equity; mobilizing and organizing participatory processes with policymakers, partners, and stakeholders; and understanding the gender impacts of climate change. In Mali, several respondents reported that they lacked skills in organizing and working with groups.

Limited Attention to Gender Responsiveness. While almost all respondents reported that their organizations paid considerable attention to gender issues during the design and planning stages of projects, more than 70 percent of the organizations surveyed in Kenya and Ethiopia and almost 60 percent in Mali were not collecting, analyzing, or reporting gender-disaggregated data as part of their climate change activities (Table 1). About a quarter of respondents in Bangladesh reported that their organizations paid less attention to gender issues than was warranted. A large proportion of respondents in Kenya indicated they felt that greater attention and importance should be given to the difference in men's and women's mobility outside the home. In Mali, many respondents reported that their organizations did not pay

enough attention to differences in responsibilities of men and women in agriculture.

Collective Action and Group-Based Approaches. In all four countries, working with groups and adopting community-based approaches were considered important factors for the success of climate change activities. In Bangladesh, respondents said the use of group-based approaches was given less importance as a targeting criterion but more attention during the project's implementation. In Kenya, all respondents reported that organizations needed to pay greater attention to the importance of strengthening social networks during M&E. In Ethiopia and Mali, 17 and 25 percent of respondents, respectively, indicated that their organization should more often use and implement group-based approaches.

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KEY INSIGHTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The organizations surveyed were actively working on climate change issues. Responses revealed strong awareness of factors essential to the success of climate change initiatives. Despite this awareness and the presence of national strategies and action plans, there seemed to be no explicit and clearly defined strategies within the organizations to contribute to the national and collective efforts and, more importantly, no explicit and measurable targets or M&E systems to track progress and outcomes over time. This may be a reflection of the lack of clear, achievable targets on outcomes and impacts in NAPAs. Some of the gaps in skills, awareness, practices, and human resources could be addressed through training and learning programs, but some gaps were structural and organizational in nature. While organizational and management training could help, changes in management structure and practices, and in organizational culture, may also be needed.

Many organizations had a limited awareness of and emphasis on many key considerations at each stage of the project cycle, including the need for target groups and beneficiaries to participate in the design and planning stages; the importance of profitability, financial sustainability, and market access; and attention to gender, social, political, and cultural issues in the design and implementation of climate change projects. While attention to gender issues was perceived as important during the design and planning stage of projects, it generally received much less attention during implementation and even less during M&E. Given the greater vulnerability of women to climate change and the resulting implications for children's development, food security, and well-being, greater capacity building and resources are needed to improve gender-sensitive impact assessment moving forward.

Respondents also reported limited accountability of their organizations to the affected rural communities and a lack of M&E to track and report progress over time. Many of the M&E indicators perceived to be important or highly important by respondents were reportedly not emphasized within their organizations. Other organizational challenges reported by respondents included limited transparency; limited mobility to conduct work; lack of coordination among staff within the organization; inadequate resources to conduct work (especially in Kenya and Mali); and mismanagement or leakage of resources, which had a demotivating effect. These results suggest a need for organizational capacity strengthening for

TABLE 1 Use of gender-disaggregated data for monitoring and evaluation (%)

Activity	Bangladesh (14)	Ethiopia (26)	Kenya (36)	Mali (11)
Do not collect, analyze, or report gender-disaggregated data	25	76	72	59
Collect, analyze, or report data on women, men, girls, and boys in household	41	14	19	15
Collect, analyze, or report data on female-headed households and male-headed households	34	10	9	26

Source: Ragasa et al. (2013).
Note: Numbers in parentheses are the number of organizations involved in climate change adaptation who responded to this survey.

those local organizations working in and providing services to rural communities and groups and for improving M&E within these organizations, in addition to the more common technical training activities for climate change management and gender and social analysis. These efforts should be coupled with greater commitment from management and higher authorities to promote the organizational changes needed to improve the effectiveness of projects. More resources and training will not be enough to ensure the success of climate change efforts without a greater commitment and cultural change within the organizations themselves. Further empirical analyses are needed to explore detailed strategies to promote changes in organizational culture and to capture the complexity of organizational and institutional issues hindering climate change adaptation efforts.

FOR FURTHER READING

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