



IMPROVING ADAPTIVE CAPACITY AND EQUITY IN CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PROJECTS

Lessons from project implementers in Ghana, Kenya
and South Africa

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The impacts of and the ability to respond to climate change are closely intertwined with poverty, inequality, and inequity. Inequities can perpetuate poverty, limited access to assets and capacities, and shape differential vulnerabilities and the impacts that climate change has on individuals and societies (Olsson et al. 2014, IPCC 2023). Poor and marginalised people, especially those who face intersecting inequalities due to discrimination based on gender identity, disability, race, ethnicity, economic status, and age, among others, are the least likely to be able to withstand the inevitable effects of climate change (Paul n.d.). On top of this, climate change can further exacerbate poverty and existing inequalities, as well as reverse development gains (Roy et al. 2018). Addressing the underlying development and structural, political and social issues related to inequality and inequity must go hand in hand with efforts to reduce climate risk (Eriksen et al. 2021). Without this, it is unlikely that vulnerability to climate change will be reduced.

The interviews were guided by a framework we developed that combines elements from existing frameworks on livelihoods and assets (Natarajan et al., 2020), development, climate change and adaptive capacity (McGray et al. 2007; Lemos et al. 2013, 2016), and equity dimensions (Leach et al. 2018).



Using our framework we explored the following topics:

- project activities that a) enhance capacities to respond to climate risks (specific adaptive capacity) and b) that address livelihood and human development needs and reduce poverty and inequality (generic adaptive capacity);
- whether and how local priorities, values, practices, and knowledge were considered in project design and implementation (recognitional equity);
- whether and how (processes by which) local participants and other actors were included in the design and implementation of projects and the steps/measures taken to strengthen inclusion (procedural equity);
- who was included in projects and how, and who benefited (distributional equity);
- contextual and other challenges to building adaptive capacity and ensuring equity; and lastly
- outcomes that could be considered transformative (stories of agency and change).

We then analysed the interview data to identify the factors and processes that enabled projects to reduce vulnerability, improve livelihoods and adaptive capacity, and address recognitional, procedural and distributional equity, while simultaneously reducing climate risk.

Based on our analyses, we formulated a list of lessons that can be applied when climate change adaptation projects are being designed, and when they are being implemented.

WHEN PROJECTS ARE BEING DESIGNED

1) EMBED LOCAL EXPERTS IN PROJECTS ALONGSIDE SITE-BASED MANAGERS

To best support locally-led adaptation and equity, prudently engage and embed local community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations and experts in projects, and/or deploy locally-based project managers at project sites. Local experts who i) are familiar with the cultural and governance context, ii) have an established and trusting relationship with the community and its leaders, and iii) have open and comfortable channels for communication, can provide the understanding needed to prioritise equity – particularly recognitional and procedural equity.

However, because vested interests and divisive politics operate at all levels within communities local partners should be cautiously engaged. Conducting a baseline assessment of community politics and power dynamics can support these efforts (see Lesson 8).

2) JOINTLY AGREE ON A SET OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES, AND REFLECT ON THEM CONTINUOUSLY

To support and empower vulnerable community members and increase transparency and fairness, actively work with a set of principles focused on equity and justice that guide project design, processes and stakeholder engagement.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

It is critical to have an organisation that has experience in community engagement...that has experience on the ground, that understands the terrain and the context, that is committed to issues of women's empowerment and gender equality. Otherwise, what would have been intended to be a gain may end up escalating and creating more problems.

EXAMPLE

One project mentioned using the PANT principle (Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, and Transparency) in their regular reflections.

A useful entry point for establishing a set of principles are the categories of adaptation suggested by Sing et al. (2021), particularly those that describe effective adaptation as i) reduced vulnerability or increased adaptive capacity, as ii) sustainable development, as iii) just and equitable, and as iv) transformation.

Continuously reflect on these principles throughout projects to prevent unintended consequences from going unnoticed, and to help prevent new inequities from impacting those most vulnerable.

3) BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT PROJECT POSSIBILITIES (AND LIMITATIONS)

To avoid unrealistic expectations and disappointments, be strategic and open about what projects can achieve, and why. Acknowledge that, despite best efforts, some expectations may be created that will not be met. Reflect on this risk at the outset of projects, and throughout projects.

4) EMPHASISE SOCIAL, RELATIONAL AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Ensure projects' social, relational, and cultural aspects are given as much attention, planning and funding as the technical project aspects. To improve collective agency and social cohesion in projects, and consequently the long-term sustainability of projects, allocate time and funding to the following efforts:

i) **Regularly engage community members in participatory processes to strengthen their capacities to recognise and address inequities.** Sensitisation and training of community members and leaders around gender issues and other inequities is considered essential especially in highly uneven and patriarchal contexts.

ii) **Work closely with communities to build relationships, trust and collective ownership of projects.** Doing so will enhance social capital, reduce unhealthy power dynamics, help respond appropriately to cultural issues and concerns and create collective ownership of projects. Approaches to facilitate dialogue include multi-actor engagement in innovative and creative spaces, visioning exercises, and scenario development. All of these require sensitive and strong facilitation skills.

iii) **Create a common language and shared vision among project participants.** This can bring everyone on board and engender appreciation of different roles, views, and needs.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

Reflective sessions, whether it's with your community, whether it's internal, are really, really important. But sometimes things are just going so smoothly that you forget to do it; even if it goes at its best, you should be reflecting.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

It's very important for you as an implementer to be transparent. Not only to political leaders, but also to the community. Explain to them what you need, what is going to be done, how much is going to be spent, if there are going to be any job opportunities, how those job opportunities are going to be sourced.

If you don't raise the expectations of the community members during project implementation you are bound to succeed. Tell them the truth, tell them what you can support and what you cannot support, right from the word go so that they know that this is it. So, once you draw the boundaries of what the project can support and what the project cannot support, they are clear and ready to go along with you.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

I would be more explicit about rights from the get-go within the project design team and would include an introductory section on rights - including the interplay between customary and national (constitutional) - during the workshops. In the introduction I would include a section on gender-specific rights relevant to the context, and if possible other minority groups' rights due to the intersectional vulnerabilities at play in the village.

v) **Foster social learning and support horizontal and vertical social capital (see Lesson 16).** This improves collective agency and social cohesion and consequently the long-term sustainability of projects.

The benefits of paying attention to social and relational issues were apparent across projects. Including all these social dimensions in projects takes time, and creative methodologies and will benefit from the involvement of local experts (see Lesson 1) who are well-versed in the social, political, and cultural context and suitably qualified to facilitate the process. Funders need to recognise and take this into consideration in setting project timelines and funding as a lack of attention to these issues could reinforce exclusion and consequently vulnerability of marginalised groups.



Photo from ASSAR project photo archive

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

I would say, especially in the pastoral communities where they are patriarchal, you'd have to be very proactive in terms of looking for those avenues that can engage women. Otherwise, they are not going to be there.

EXAMPLES

Several stories were shared where communities, through the collective strength of their new structures (both governance and specialised committees/associations), were able to stand together to protect their land and livelihoods against external incursion and illegal practices, negotiate better prices and reduce exploitative dependence.

One project mentioned how, through their efforts to promote gender equity, women in the community had become more assertive, more engaged, started exploring new enterprises and opportunities, and even won an Equator prize.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

One key lesson that we have learnt is that you need to make time to listen to the community's perspective and you need time to engage them to understand their circumstances so that you'll be able to support them to change the way they do things.

5) USE PLACE-BASED INTEGRATIVE APPROACHES

Place-based integrative approaches (e.g., multifunctional landscape approaches, whole value chain approaches) that work across a range of activities, and that reflect peoples' day-to-day livelihoods, support both generic and specific adaptive capacity by providing multiple benefits. By expanding the range of benefits and beneficiaries, these approaches also increase equity.

Agro-processing, local value addition and business-related capacity building were seen to support collective effort through establishment of cooperatives, provide livelihood diversification options, build multiple livelihood assets, and benefit a range of actors in different parts of the value chain. Such value chains were often promoted as part of a broader landscape approach and were often linked with organic production (e.g., cassava) and other types of natural products such as honey, briquettes and shea butter.



Photo from ASSAR archive showing
pastoralists in Ethiopia, by Jennifer Leavy

EXAMPLE

Examples of the diverse benefits from such landscape level adaptation projects include: sales of harvested products; enhanced natural capital and landscape management; sale of carbon credits; agroecological practices (and associated benefits such as reduced input costs, greater self-reliance, and organic or other niche markets); integration of crops and livestock; and local employment opportunities linked to natural resource management and restoration.

These multiple benefits promoted social-ecological resilience and reduced climate risk.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

...within the broader landscape level, the activities of sustainable charcoal production, organic cassava, honey and all of that, is also leading to landscape restoration activities. So we are now working with several partners to look at how to build some carbon credit incentives from the restoration activities going on in the landscape to generate more revenue to support the other livelihood enterprises we are currently doing.

6) INCLUDE LOCAL ACCESS TO CREDIT OR CAPITAL

It is well known that improved access to credit or capital can have a significantly positive impact on livelihood security and poverty alleviation. However, such interventions tend not to be viewed as a response to climate risk and as a result are often neglected in adaptation projects. But savings groups, or other mechanisms to increase access to credit, can greatly enhance generic adaptive capacity and – in turn – support specific adaptive capacity and climate resilience, especially amongst the most vulnerable.



7) AVOID MAKING PROJECTS TOO AMBITIOUS AND SPATIALLY DISCONNECTED, AT LEAST INITIALLY

Place-based, livelihood-focused projects that are too large and ambitious (cutting across multiple regions and countries, and/or aiming to achieve multiple outcomes in limited time) can become unwieldy, disconnected, and fail to deliver on equity and transformation. Specific attention to adaptive capacity and equity is better achieved in smaller landscape-level (rather than regional) projects that have a strong focus on building local agency (whilst linked into local and national policy).

Projects implemented by NGOs with a long-term presence in a given area provide the best examples of transformative outcomes. Close relationships and constant and direct communication are needed between the implementers of projects and the community. This is difficult to achieve if projects covers a wide area and varying contexts.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

The Village Savings and Loans were helping people and the important thing that we need to notice is that it reduced the migration of people from the north to the South, especially during the long dry season, because there was money available for women to borrow and then engage in economic activities during the dry season.

The introduction of the village savings and loans associations (VSLAs) in project communities proved to be a very effective tool for poverty reduction and women's empowerment. It was noted that women in the project communities became more empowered with economic decision-making and also in several cases taking on leadership roles in the groups and communities.

We realized that most financial institutions, especially rural banks, are less inclined to give loans to women farmers because they are concerned that because they do not have big farmlands, they may not be able to pay back the loan. We tried to address this from the perspective of the women's association that could provide loans from savings or that the association could secure a loan for their members instead of the members themselves going to the credit agency.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

One of the challenges we experienced was that we were very expensive. The area was very large where we were implementing the project. We were too ambitious. We were implementing from our headquarters and had to travel very far. So, if I'm to implement the projects again, probably I'll be on the ground. The office implementing the project should be on the site near the community. Just select a smaller area where you'll have impact and then expand with time, but we were too ambitious. We were in very many different sub counties within a very short time.

However, it is important to recognise that some types of projects can operate at a higher scale and cover wider areas (e.g., those delivering insurance or other social safety nets). Embedding projects into wider structures can also support transformation at higher scales (see Lessons 15 and 16). Smaller projects can also be scaled at a later stage drawing on the learning and experience to improve their effectiveness.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

It's better to be in a small space. With little resources it is better to concentrate on one area and do it nicely



Photo from ASSAR archive showing pastoralists in Kenya, by Dave Loubser

WHEN PROJECTS ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED

8) CONDUCT A BASELINE ASSESSMENT OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Accurate and robust assessments of the local context are critical for providing essential baseline information for addressing the different dimensions of equity, such as: existing rights, knowledge, practices, and cultural norms (recognitional equity); who is vulnerable and contextual constraints (distributional equity); and existing institutions, power dynamics, and hierarchies (procedural equity).

Higher-level assessments may not be nuanced enough to provide the information needed to unpack existing inequities. An improved understanding of who is vulnerable and why can support the transparent selection of project participants/beneficiaries at the local level by providing those responsible (e.g., traditional authorities, local leaders, or other local institutions) with the necessary criteria to ensure the most vulnerable benefit. Good understanding of local vulnerabilities can also help in the design of sensitisation processes (see Lesson 4).

Having a baseline also allows for ongoing assessment or monitoring of the impacts of projects on livelihood assets and activities, and on the distribution of benefits.

9) PAY ATTENTION TO TIMING AND TIMELINESS

The timing of activities is seldom given adequate attention in projects. Activities are not always appropriately sequenced (particularly in terms of the development of infrastructure), and seasonality is not always considered. Project delays can undermine the way projects is perceived at a local level, and can impact negatively on the very people the project is trying to benefit.

10) BUILD ON PAST AND CURRENT LOCAL PRACTICES AND KNOWLEDGES

Local people have intimate knowledge of their own context, and in many situations they are the experts who best understand i) what is or has been affecting their farming or landscape, and ii) what practices and adaptation measures are most appropriate and effective for their cultural and environmental context. This information is critical to project design and implementation, and can facilitate locally-led adaptation that is responsive to local knowledge, needs and priorities (i.e., ensure recognitional equity).

EXAMPLE

Examples of baseline data collection shared by respondents included the undertaking of situational analyses, social analyses, rapid gender analyses, climate change impact surveys, inventories of existing groups in the community, assessments of soils, crops, climate and constraints and opportunities, farmers typology, using participatory learning and action to understand context, and vulnerability assessments.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

For me, one of the key lessons that I've learned that I have to do differently in such projects is to ensure that the studies are done early, and the physical infrastructure is in place early in the program and then we can monitor the progress through the lifetime of the project.

Timeliness of input delivery is very critical, especially in the area we worked, which was a single season opportunity. Now if there's a slip in supporting them with especially the input incentive, you have failed and once you fail it means that you have put the livelihoods of the whole family or community into jeopardy. So, timeliness of support is very important and then if you do things right, you get a lot of spillovers into other communities that have not even benefited.

The cassava cuttings arrived late so when they went into the ground the rain stopped, and the cassava died. So that was very discouraging.

It is essential to build on what people are already doing and, where relevant, revitalise past practices that can achieve the goal of climate resilience, as well as have other co-benefits such as building social, relational and natural capital. Agroecological farming practices closely reflect the way people used to farm before colonisation and agricultural modernisation.

As one respondent emphasised, recognition that people have survived for millenia in very harsh environments has to be the starting point of any project implementation – “there is an inbuilt resilience in the cultural architecture”, and this needs to be unpacked and understood. Local people’s inherent capability is reflected in how they live and in what they do. The latter needs to be considered in adaptation projects, otherwise there is the danger of introducing activities that are ineffective since they fail to link up with how people currently live and survive.

Projects should actively seek ways to bring in local understandings, perspectives and practices and provide opportunities and spaces for learning and knowledge exchange, using sensitive mechanisms such as arts-based approaches for bringing together different types of knowledge.

It is, however, important to balance local knowledge with scientific understandings of the risks and impacts of climate change and, in some cases, what is possible within the bounds of projects. For example, in some contexts it may be maladaptive to continue to grow certain crops or to introduce extensive crop irrigation. Ensuring recognitional equity often means dealing with some trade-offs (e.g., between traditional patriarchal norms and gender equity, or between local priorities and projected climate impacts of those priorities).



Photo from ASSAR archive, by Tali Hoffman

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

They came in and used day-to-day activities that people were already engaged in and... were already familiar with, you know, seed banking. They were herding goats and they were already talking about managing water sources. Then you use those to build a project and you can then slowly, slowly bring in new interventions. If you were doing cropping, you bring in climate resilience using the very crops that people were already growing without bringing in new ideas from outside.

All I was saying is we've been making a mistake where when we go to the farmers, we treat them like they know nothing. I'm suggesting that for future projects we first superimpose our trials on what the farmer is doing.

My advice would be that, if you want to talk about designing climate change projects and you don't align it to the very core of the community members economic or socio-cultural livelihoods, you may not succeed. I initially indicated that you can't find climate change as an objective in the project during the early stages, but everything we did was responding to the climate change. So, if you use sometimes indirect approaches which address the direct issues of the beneficiaries and then climate change adaptation becomes an added advantage.

We just knew that we're not trying to reinvent the wheel, we're just trying to take people back to what they knew generations back.

I think that there was huge learning, even for some of us, because once we got down to the communities to work with them, we realized that they had their own beliefs, they had their own systems by which they could determine whether this year there was going to be a drought or this year there was going to be flooding or there was going to be good weather for their farming, there was going to be adequate rainfall and all that. Some of them said that if they saw certain birds flying in a certain direction, they knew that the birds were fleeing from a dry spell coming up.

11) INTRODUCE NEW PRACTICES AND TECHNOLOGIES ITERATIVELY

Building on local activities, practices, and knowledge while also bringing in some new technologies and practices requires a step-by-step approach. It is important to not overwhelm people. Start with what people do already (see Lesson 10). Then add small improvements to particular things (e.g., increasing productivity, saving water). Then acknowledge and share what the benefits of these changes have been before moving on to other steps.

12) FIND PRACTICAL WAYS TO SUPPORT PEER-TO-PEER AND SOCIAL LEARNING

Farmers learn best from each other in social and practical contexts (e.g., through field-based demonstrations, experiments on farmers' own plots, and exchange visits). These peer-to-peer learning sessions can help to reach more farmers – particularly when paired with virtual information sessions – and can contribute to distributional equity.



Photo from ASSAR archive, by Mark Tebbboth

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

....we come out with a list of things that people feel they are motivated to do now.

So they prioritise what they have the energy to start on so we don't try to deal with everything at the beginning. So it is a process of what we call innovation development. We try out new ideas alongside what people were doing before.

We work with them regarding what to compare and then help them to measure this.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

Farmers need to see their fellow farmers practicing or adopting a particular practice. Even though they might have heard about it, they are not really willing to do it. But once they visit other farmers and they realize that fellow farmers in this district are actually doing something different, they are more likely to try it out.

We have realized that peer-to-peer is a very key model of training adults because if they visit another group, and they are doing the same things then it becomes very real to them and adopting that becomes very easy for farmers. We encourage in our programming many peer-to-peer visits for farmers.

We were surprised that we had as many as I think, over 2000 or 3000 people who were not directly supported by the project, but they were adopting some of the interventions by themselves in other communities.

I think for many projects of the future there has to be an extension component. If you don't do that, then you're not going to reach as many farmers. So even if it's not the farmers using their smartphones, they'll get their children to get that information for them and at least we'll be able to get what we need to get to them in terms of extension.

13) BE FLEXIBLE, ADAPTABLE AND RESPONSIVE

It is critical for projects to respond to local issues as they emerge, and to be open to changing the direction of a project to ensure it is inclusive and enhances equity. Even small changes can have significant impacts.



14) ENCOURAGE INCLUSIVITY IN RELATION TO GENDER AND AGE

While it is critically important for projects to focus on gender equity and women's empowerment, being gender inclusive – encouraging men (boys, husbands) and women (girls, wives) to work together, even if the main project beneficiaries are women – can have transformative outcomes. This inclusivity can help to avoid or reduce conflict, and to increase resilience, productivity, income, and food security for the entire household.

EXAMPLE

One project found that women were not attending the agricultural training sessions because they were not interested in the crops being promoted. When the project began promoting the crops that the women were interested in, attendance at the sessions improved. In another project, low attendance at training sessions was dramatically improved by encouraging participants to come up with their own calendar of training events. A third project realized that they could not treat all farmers the same and different types of farmers had different needs and adaptation requirements. They therefore came up with a farmer's typology and targeted their adaptation interventions accordingly.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

We developed a farmer typology type of arrangement in our decision process where, depending on the resources and the intention of the farmers and the amount of resources they have, their activities are different. There are a few farmers out there that have tractors and who can work with mechanization and increasing size of yields. So, what you recommend for them is very different from the granny with her 10 by 10 backyard. We have tended to paint farmers with the same brush because it's too much work to work out specifically what to do for different people.

EXAMPLE

An example of the mutual benefits of working together was revealed in one project that supported shea nut production and sales, which is typically women's work. However, the project implementer found that many more nuts could be gathered without negative consequences for regeneration. But women had neither the time nor the ability to transport more nuts. The project therefore encouraged husbands to get involved in nut harvesting (using carts and tricycles) which benefited both groups and the family as a whole. Men were also engaged to monitor the illegal activities that impact shea production and affect their wives' livelihoods.

Adaptation projects should also pay more attention to youth, as they are the social group that will experience the future impacts from climate change. They are also vanguards of change who are typically more willing to adopt and adapt to new ways of doing things (e.g., pursue novel entrepreneurial activities, use new technologies). Find out what they are interested in (it is not necessarily the type of rural development and farming activities that have been promoted to date), and try to involve them in the design and implementation of projects.



Photo from ASSAR Ethiopia archive, by Mark Tebbboth

15) SUPPORT, EMPOWER AND CAPACITATE LOCALLY-LED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

Locally-led governance structures/institutions are best for building collective agency and supporting equitable decision making. These institutions could be existing structures such as traditional authorities, women's groups, associations related to specific activities (e.g., farmers' associations), or new structures such as Community Adaptation Committees. These local structures can also play an important role in selecting project participants or beneficiaries and in managing any conflicts that may arise during projects. However, much depends on the legitimacy and effectiveness of those structures that exist, highlighting the importance of a baseline understanding of existing governance systems (see Lesson 8).

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

For higher sustainability, next time if we have to do such a project, we have to consciously include the husbands of women we are to work with.

So, we have seen an interest of the men now to support the general well-being of the landscape so their women can benefit. We try to help them to see how they can each be partners of themselves by supporting each other rules and not encroaching.

We've had men who've now realized the need to empower their wives to have their own incomes and livelihoods.

EXAMPLE

An illustrative example comes from a project that had a youth-focused 'green entrepreneurship' programme that was said to have transformed lives. The programme was so successful that it generated its own momentum, with local youths taking over from the project trainers and training others in their community and beyond, before mentoring others to do the same.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

Well, how I will do it differently probably. I will include the youth. The youth will be part of the design. They are more proactive. They're digital. If there's information that you need to pass, you can use the youth in terms of maybe monitoring the project, they can send photos, they can do follow up easily. We were engaging the school children; we felt like young people or children have a different way of learning. They learn faster, especially when it has to do with technology than adults and so we felt that introducing climate smart practices or technologies to them at that age creates a foundation for them to build on when they grow up and they become farmers. The school children sometimes talk about some of these practices with their parents when they go back home and so, if the parent is not part of the farmers that were selected for the training process, he/she can still hear about it from their children.

Community-level structures should be inclusive and representative (this may mean opening up traditional councils to social groups who have been historically excluded). They should also ideally work across scales to ensure that on-the-ground voices are included in local government planning processes for adaptation. Within community-level structures, it is useful to have sub-structures orientated around specific activities. Representative leaders from these community-level structures should be a part of higher-level (municipal, district or county) structures.

Capacity building that covers issues of inclusion is essential for effective and well-informed committees and to ensure fairness, impartiality, and consistency. Examples of such structures having a formal constitution that is developed by the broader community were provided and this was said to strengthen their legitimacy.

16) EXPLORE PARTNERSHIPS FOR COLLECTIVE AGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

While projects may be based in a particular place, working across scales through horizontal and vertical integration is essential. This integration promotes effective and long-term partnerships with government and other stakeholders that are critical for the implementation of projects and for their sustainability. Working with the private sector and market actors is also essential for enhancing income.

There are different ways to actively promote partnerships. When designing projects, allocate funding and time to develop partnerships through learning and exchange activities, by convening advisory committees, by embedding projects in existing government plans and programs (e.g., medium-term expenditure frameworks), and by providing resources for local government processes and structures. Also allocate time and funding to build capacity for these partnerships, particularly at the local level (see Lesson 15). However, it is important to be judicious and ensure that potential partners have sufficient capacity and commitment.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

So, we have built from scratch community resource governance structures with appropriate governance instruments that are backed by local bylaws to support the communities in addressing unsustainable land use practices like charcoal production, illegal logging of rosewood.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

We also work very closely with other peer organizations because then you want to be able to discuss on various platforms and make recommendations together as a group, then engage the government for them to take action. We've also come up with referral systems where we are able to refer people in cases of sexual and gender-based violence, child protection and those sorts of things. We also have systems where you can be able to refer people to the relevant government institutions.

PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

These project advisory groups I think were very beneficial from my point of view, the district and the local municipalities were fully aware of all the projects, they know what's there, they're looking for opportunities to continue funding them. So long as you anchor your project to the government, it will continue. It's just a problem when you go there, and you don't involve anybody. So, I would really recommend working much closer with the municipalities and then to generate better collaboration between communities, businesses and then the municipalities to make sure that that enabling environment is created at the lower level.

Part of what I said earlier is creating that agency at the community level and getting the communities to mobilize and organize themselves in such a way that they will be able to meaningfully engage with the government. And as I said, one of the things we aimed at is trying to see how community needs can be integrated into aspects of the county government planning. The reason for that is because at that point then it means that there's some kind of sustainability; when the government is actually budgeting for that. We also try to see how we could engage other actors from the private sector.

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