



Planning for the future and adapting to climate change in Mozambique

Lessons from ACCRA

March 2014

ACCRA USES A SET OF research and capacity building tools to promote pro-poor and participatory climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) in planning processes. Through engaging and supporting local communities, ACCRA seeks to help districts produce better plans in the face of future change and uncertainty. In turn, ACCRA supports the scaling up of its activities across the country and influence on national policy.

ACCRA in Mozambique is a consortium made up of Care International, Oxfam, World Vision, and is led by Save the Children. Its extended committee includes key government actors Ministry of Coordination of Environmental Affairs (MICOA) and the Ministry of Planning and Development (MPD). ACCRA in Mozambique works with government and civil society organisations (CSOs) to integrate climate change adaptation into policy, programmes and practice. Internationally, ACCRA works on CCA and DRR across Ethiopia, Mozambique and Uganda.

ACCRA's approach

Promoting Flexible and Forward-Looking Decision Making

ACCRA's earlier work showed that policymakers face difficult trade-offs in planning for a changing and uncertain future. Yet many development actors continue to plan for the near-term, with little room for manoeuvre or contingency. ACCRA therefore chose to focus on one specific characteristic of adaptive capacity in order to help decision makers and planning better prepared for the future: Flexible and Forward-Looking Decision Making (FFDM).

As a concept, FFDM is relatively straightforward to understand (Box One). In practice, though, it is often hard to communicate and to relate to complex real-world problems. We therefore need new approaches to promoting the principles that make up FFDM. One solution comes in the form of 'serious games' supported by tools to initiate reflection on how to relate principles of FFDM experienced during the game to the real world. In collaboration with the abaci partnership and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre, ACCRA developed a 'game-enabled reflection approach' to promote FFDM.

The game-enabled reflection approach was tailored for district-level planners and developed into a two- to three-day workshop. This was held in Guijá District in Gaza province. At the same time, ACCRA undertook research to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach in promoting FFDM with district development planners in Mozambique.

What is FFDM?

Decision making is flexible and forward-looking when it:

- Recognises that change will happen and requires adaptation, but that the specific direction and magnitude of change, as well as the implications for development trajectories, are uncertain.
- Is able to consider and reason about the impacts of different drivers of change on development trajectories and plans accordingly in order to maintain progress.
- Can identify enablers and initiate steps to overcome barriers to adaptation.
- Can, where needed, make changes to structures and planning processes to implement adaptation effectively, whether incremental or transformational.

Capacity building for development planning

ACCRA has used demand-driven capacity building through training and on-going support, to change the way people think about CCA, DRR and working with one another. To this end, it has produced, nationally relevant, evidence-based research and rolled out co-produced capacity building in partnership with the Mozambican government.

ACCRA has supported civil society coordination to provide policy inputs that reflect local experience and community perspectives. It does so through its consortium members in response to in-country opportunities and needs. ACCRA also involved local NGOs and CBOs in training, training of trainers and capacity building activities.

ACCRA has supported district government in view of local adaptation planning through a strong partnership with government representatives at district and national level. In particular, ACCRA has advised on best practice and guidance to develop the local adaptation plans. Through its relationship with government and its consortium members, ACCRA has shared lessons and best practice and built a strong network involving donors and academia.

Lessons learned

What has ACCRA learned from having conducted 4 years of research and capacity building in Mozambique? Below we described some of the key findings:

Local and national plans are focused on the near-term and even then don't adequately plan and budget for emergencies for most

sectors. They often fail to take a long-term perspective and recognise future change and uncertainty. Decision making, even under normal circumstances, is a tough task. Add climate change-related uncertainties to it and it becomes even harder. Therefore, district-level decision makers need tools that help them deal with complexity in a flexible manner and allow them to consider potential future threats – climate-related or otherwise.

Although communicating concepts such as uncertainty and FFDM can be difficult, a game-enabled reflection approach can help in communicating FFDM to development practitioners.

But changing perceptions and institutional structures is a gradual process, requiring continuing support from development partners. Interventions delivered as a one-off and in isolation are unlikely to succeed. Successful and sustainable interventions will require considerable and well-timed investment.

Identifying ‘champions of change’ is key for promoting FFDM and adaptation. Because adopting the principles of FFDM implies such a fundamental departure from business-as-usual ways of district planning and decision-making, the role of ‘champions of change’ is central to its success. In Guijá, the permanent secretary for the district was key to bringing this training and the related topics to her district, with support from the chief administrator. One sector director mentioned that the permanent secretary had been instrumental in her role as champion for issues around DRR: *‘now we talk about natural disasters in all our meetings’*.

Political buy-in for FFDM works best where need is recognised.

Flooding affected large areas of Mozambique during the course of ACCRA’s activities (originally meant for January 2013), causing a national disaster and requiring the postponement of the workshop by three months. This event is likely to have led to increased awareness of impacts of natural hazards, including awareness around possible future climate change impacts, and may have influenced the degree to which there was political buy-in to aspects of FFDM. As noted by participants in the Guijá workshop, ACCRA added to initiatives underway to deal with CCA and DRR:

‘The workshop strengthened our thoughts and initiatives and planning – but is not the sole cause of the [positive] changes.’ (Director of Health, Guijá district, 2013)

‘[The workshop] reinforced what people were already doing in response.’ (Director of Agriculture, Guijá district, 2013)

Opportunities do exist to do things differently. Recognising inherent limitations in the rigidity of policy cycles and planning processes in Mozambique, there is always *some*

flexibility. Even when strict targets are handed down from central government, district planners can often decide the specific modalities of implementation.

Recommendations

To enhance adaptive capacity and promote FFDM, many different actors will need to take action. ACCRA recommends that the following activities be instigated:

District governments should exploit the opportunities to promote FFDM within constraints by:

- Integrating CCA and DRR into implementation of plans. For example, the budget received by Guijá district has remained the same but there are some new development priorities, including promotion of drought-resistant crops, investment in higher-lying areas that are not susceptible to flooding and the possibility of building an alternative government office in an area not prone to flooding, so that, when flooding occurs, district government can still function effectively. Specifically, the director of agriculture is willing to make changes according to need from the budget allocated to his department, the head of one sub-district is taking this forward at community level through future visioning with the community to produce more food and create food reserves, and the leader of one locality said everyone now touches on issues of climate change and DRR.
- Seeking new ways of engaging with stakeholders. For example in Guijá, officials described different types of interactions with existing partners. One participant reported, *‘We negotiated with the [new] banana company to build open drainage channels to avoid floods in the future’*.
- Collaborating across and within different sectors and districts to pool resources and draw up contingency plans. According to some in Guijá, inter-departmental collaboration has improved. While formal collaboration has not changed, informal links have increased and there are now more inter-departmental interactions, *‘as we saw the need to work together’* (director of health, Guijá district, 2013).
- Reflecting on where the district aims to be on time horizons beyond the traditional three- to five-year planning cycles.

National governments play a key role as they set the parameters for planning at all administrative levels:

- MICOA and MPD should encourage districts to develop longer-term strategies that incorporate principles of FFDM such that districts are free to define and shape their own development targets based

on local needs and priorities. In Guijá, some feel that district planning process now includes more bottom-up participation: *‘We aren’t just stuck with top down activities: we work from the bottom up and it’s a much more open process.’* (Head of Chivongoene sub-district, 2013). The changes that have occurred relate to changing attitudes and confidence, as well as collaboration and cooperation.

- Greater coordination across sectors and ministries, including MICOA and MPD, and between different levels of government should be promoted, as well as engagement with CSOs. Participants in Guijá requested involvement of all stakeholders properly in the planning process, especially community leaders and representatives from sub-district and locality level. It was also suggested that government strengthens its engagement with CSOs and considers the church an important partner in planning and implementation.

Non-governmental and civil society organisations should incorporate the principles of FFDM into their own policy and practice by:

- Mobilising technical and financial resources to promote on going dialogue around FFDM.
- Promoting collaboration across boundaries. For example in Guijá, community and sub-district officials and civil society representatives (e.g. pastors) were

present at the ACCRA workshop. This was in response to demand from country coordinators for community involvement and a practical training outcome.

- Bringing together stakeholders that would not normally collaborate. For example, the ACCRA facilitators took the chance to work with a group of young people from the national youth parliament in Maputo for one day. The team noted that the engagement and enthusiasm of the young people showed that children and youth should not be seen purely as a vulnerable group to be protected but as active and strong agents of change: *‘it was a great experience...as an important evidence that children’s active participation is critical and must be incorporated in the planning process at local level.’* (ACCRA Mozambique Coordinator, 2013).

Donors and multilateral agencies need to ensure they are responsive to changing priorities and unforeseen circumstances by:

- Enabling greater flexibility by moving away from target-based thinking to look for beneficial outcomes in the longer term.
- Adjusting funding timescales to provide incentives to consider and promote longer-term objectives within projects and programmes.

This Briefing Paper is based on research carried out by ACCRA in 2012–14 in Ethiopia, Uganda and Mozambique. The full report is available from www.odi.org.uk.

‘Planning for an Uncertain Future: Promoting adaptation to climate change through Flexible and Forward-looking Decision Making’, London, ODI.

ACCRA – the Africa Climate Change Resilience Alliance – is a research, advocacy and capacity building consortium of Oxfam GB, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Care International, Save the Children and World Vision International. It works in Mozambique, Uganda and Ethiopia. ACCRA is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

Further information about ACCRA and contact details can be found at: community.eldis.org/accra/

Detailed information about the ‘game-enabled reflection approach’ can be found at: www.climatecentre.org/site/accra

The views and opinions presented in this briefing paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of ODI, ACCRA, ACCRA consortium members and affiliates or DFID.

Other relevant ACCRA publications include (available at www.odi.org.uk):

- Jones, L., Ludi, E. and Levine, S. (2010) ‘Towards a Characterisation of Adaptive Capacity: A Framework for Analysing Adaptive Capacity at the Local Level’. Background Note. London: ODI.
- Levine, S., Ludi, E. and Jones, L. (2011) ‘Rethinking Support for Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change: The Role of Development Interventions’. London: ACCRA, ODI.
- Ludi, E., Jones, L., and Levine, S. (2012) *Changing focus? How to start taking adaptive capacity seriously*. Briefing Paper 71. London, ODI.
- Jones, L., Ludi, E., Beautelement, P., Broenner, C. and Bachofen, C. (2013a) ‘New Approaches to Promoting Flexible and Forward-Looking Decision Making: Insights from Complexity Science, Climate Change Adaptation and “Serious Gaming”’. London: ODI.
- Jones, L., Ludi, E., Amsalu, A. Artur, L., Bunce, M., Matheson, S., Muhumuza, W. and Zacarias, D. (2013b) ‘The Political Economy of Local Adaptation Planning: Exploring Barriers to Flexible and Forward-looking Decision Making in Three Districts in Ethiopia, Uganda and Mozambique’. London: ODI.