

## TRAINING ON COMMUNITY BASED ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE IN GHANA

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Adaptation to climate change is an important area to be considered for the planning, implementation, and sustainability of water supply, sanitation, and hygiene interventions. The USAID West Africa Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene (USAID WA-WASH) Program, through CARE (one of the implementing partners) organized, from June 17 to 21, 2013, a five-day training for its partners, community members, and stakeholders on community based adaptation (CBA) to climate change. The training brought together 28 participants from 10 intervention communities, civil servants, and staff from local NGOs. The objective of the training was to equip the participants with the skills needed to design CBA strategies and plans. The specific objectives of the training were to support the participants to: (1) identify areas, communities and groups that are vulnerable to climate change; (2) analyze vulnerability and adaptive capacity of the target groups, based on both scientific information and indigenous knowledge; (3) enable the participants to identify priority adaptation issues in the intervention areas; (4) and develop strategies to address these issues at household, local, and national levels. The CBA training was a follow-up to the climate vulnerability and capacity analysis (CVCA) training that was conducted in February 2013. The data collected using the CVCA tool informed the development of CBA strategies. The training was conducted through plenary presentations and group work among the participants.

Community based adaptation initiatives are interventions to improve the capacity of local communities to adapt to climate change. According to the CBA framework, effective CBA strategies require an integrated approach that combines indigenous knowledge with innovative strategies that address existing vulnerabilities and build the resilience of people to face new and dynamic challenges. In addition, CBA strategies aim to protect and sustain the ecosystems that people depend on for their livelihoods. The strategies include community-led activities that support communities to adapt to climate change. To effectively build adaptive capacity, the CBA process incorporates four inter-related principles of adaptation; (1) promoting climate-resilient livelihoods, including income diversification and capacity building for planning and improved risk management; (2) minimizing the disaster risks to reduce the impact of hazards, particularly on vulnerable households and individuals; (3) developing capacities for local civil society and governmental institutions to provide better support to communities, households and individuals in their adaptation efforts; and (4) advocacy, social mobilization and empowerment to address the underlying causes of vulnerability such as bad governance, poor health, poor access to information and illiteracy.

The CBA approach emphasizes the importance of an enabling environment for its effectiveness. Thus it is not limited to promoting change at the community level but also aims to inform and influence national, regional, and international policies, promoting governance that is responsive, inclusive, and equitable. This process involves evidence-based advocacy, as well as constructive engagement in key decision-making processes at all levels. Further, the CBA approach concedes that vulnerability to climate change differs among communities and even within households, based on roles, power and access to and control over resources. This forms the basis for the CBA focus on addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability. The adaptation strategies aim to address issues such as gender inequality, poor governance, and limited access to basic services that constrain the capacity of vulnerable people to adapt to climate change. The approach aims to empower the most vulnerable people, including women and marginalized groups, to secure their livelihoods and claim their rights.

The participants were divided into three working groups to conceptualize the CBA strategies to address climate-related hazards in a pictorial form. The first group illustrated a community sensitization meeting on climate change and adaptation strategies, the second group illustrated farmers planting trees, and the third group illustrated community members using dams for irrigated farming. The session emphasized the evaluation of sustainable coping strategies as are the foundation for adaptation. The working groups further identified climate related hazards, potential adaptation strategies based on the CVCA report from one of the communities. The participants also used the climate change and environmental degradation risk and adaptation assessment (CEDRA) check list. The check list shows likely impacts of climate change and environmental degradation and possible adaptation options to address them. The participants identified climate related hazards as floods, drought, disease outbreaks, and rain storms.

Further, the participants identified the implications of the climate-related hazards as the loss of property, loss of livelihoods, disease outbreaks, insecurity, displacement of people due to floods and food insecurity resulting from drought and floods. They identified strategies to mitigate the hazards such as use of early maturing and high yielding seed varieties, planting drought and flood tolerant crop varieties, tree planting, dry season gardening, conservation agriculture, soil and water conservation technologies, mixed cropping and farming, water harvesting technologies, and income generating activities.

In order to mobilize the required resources to implement the identified strategies, the participants identified the support institutions to assist in the development and implementation of the CBA strategies as the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA), the District Assemblies (DAs), the Irrigation Development Authority (IDA), the Community Based Organizations (CBOs), the National Agricultural Research Institute, and the National Disaster Management Organization (NADMO). These institutions require capacity strengthening to enable effective implementation of the CBA plans. The capacities to be strengthened include: (1) capacity to develop an early warning system; (2) capacity to develop disaster preparedness plans; (3) capacity to disseminate weather information; (4) capacity to develop improved seed varieties (drought tolerant and early maturing varieties); (5) integration of climate change into the district assembly's development plan; and (6) training on advocacy targeting the CBOs.

The identified CBA strategies were prioritized using the pairwise ranking approach. Similarly, the participants appraised the feasibility of the identified CBA strategies based on the technical expertise available, financial feasibility, effects on the environment, and the social changes that the identified CBA strategies may bring to the community. In addition, the participants appraised the strategies based on the four principles of adaptation and how well they integrate gender using a gender analysis matrix. The strategies informed the development of CBA plans that specified activities to accomplish each strategy, the organizations responsible, capacities available, and timelines to achieve the set activities. The participants recommended the development of disaster management preparedness plan that involve all actors, the implementation and follow up of community based adaptation plans, and advocacy to include the CBA plans into district assembly development plans for budgetary support.

*This is an executive summary of a report dated July 2014. The full report is available (in English) upon request via our website. For more details about our program activities and other reports please visit <http://wawash.fiu.edu/>.*

This publication was funded by the people of the United States through the Agency for International Development (USAID) within the framework of the West Africa Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (USAID WA-WASH) Program. The views and opinions of authors expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the United States Agency for International Development of the United States Government.