

Through the development of possible stories, the Transformative Scenario Planning (TSP) process (developed by Reos Partners) enables multiple and diverse stakeholders to construct a shared understanding of a critical issue that affects them all, and then to act on the basis of this understanding.

This *Spotlight* highlights the successes and challenges of a series of TSP workshops held by ASSAR in five countries.

*the* ASSAR

SP  TLIGHT












*on*

Transformative Scenario Planning



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March 2018

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## Some Recent Project Highlights

### Meetings and Stakeholder events

[Omusati Regional Conference, Namibia](#) (March 2018)  
Second phase of Participatory Scenario Analysis work, East Africa (March 2018)  
[ASSAR/Oxfam GB influencing workshop, Namibia](#) (March 2018)  
[TSP workshop by WOTR in Jalna, India](#) (February 2018)  
[Water governance writeshop, Cape Town](#) (February 2018)  
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Second TSP workshop by IIHS in Bangalore, India (December 2017)

### Capacity building

[IIHS Adaptation Booklet, India](#) (March 2018)  
[Climate Change Adaptation Booklet, Namibia](#) (March 2018)  
[Webinar: Challenging assumptions about gender & climate adaptation](#) (March 2018)  
[Workshop for community-level women leaders in Ghana](#) (January 2018)  
[Climate Adaptation through a Youth Innovation competition, Ghana](#) (January 2018)  
ASSAR/Oxfam GB 'Writing for Impact' webinar, January 2018

### Reflections

[My escapade with RiU](#) (February 2018)  
[Writeshopping your way to writing together](#) (January 2018)

## Upcoming Events

### April-June, 2018

ASSAR migration writeshop (3-5 April 2018).....Cape Town, South Africa  
ASSAR annual meeting (13-16 June 2018).....Cape Town, South Africa  
Adaptation Futures Conference (18-21 June 2018)..... Cape Town, South Africa

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# Adapting TSP for the ASSAR context

By **Karen Goldberg**, Senior Associate at Reos Partners

We are almost at the end of ASSAR and TSPs have now been completed in West Africa, India and Southern Africa. It is timely to begin to take stock. And in doing so, it might be useful to remind ourselves of the origins of TSP and the creativity and good will that has gone into experimenting with and adapting the process for the purposes and context of ASSAR.

TSP was developed by Adam Kahane<sup>1</sup>, one of the founders of Reos Partners. It is a form of scenario planning that took the rigour and creativity of this methodology as it was being used at Royal Dutch/Shell and implemented it in 1991-92 in the context of South Africa during a period of high instability and volatility, and where the country faced an uncertain future. The approach was further honed through a number of other initiatives focusing on peace (e.g. Destino Columbia, 1996-1997, which aimed to explore possible pathways out of their decades-long internal conflict; and Vision Guatemala which aimed to rebuild the social fabric and implement Guatemala's 1996 Peace Accord after more than 35 years of civil war). This approach was a means to bring together a group of key, diverse and influential actors, all of whom thought the situation at the time was unstable, unsustainable or untenable, and who knew that they were unable to change the situation on their own. While these actors were too polarised in their positions to commit to collective action, they were all willing to come together to create stories of the future about what **could** happen.



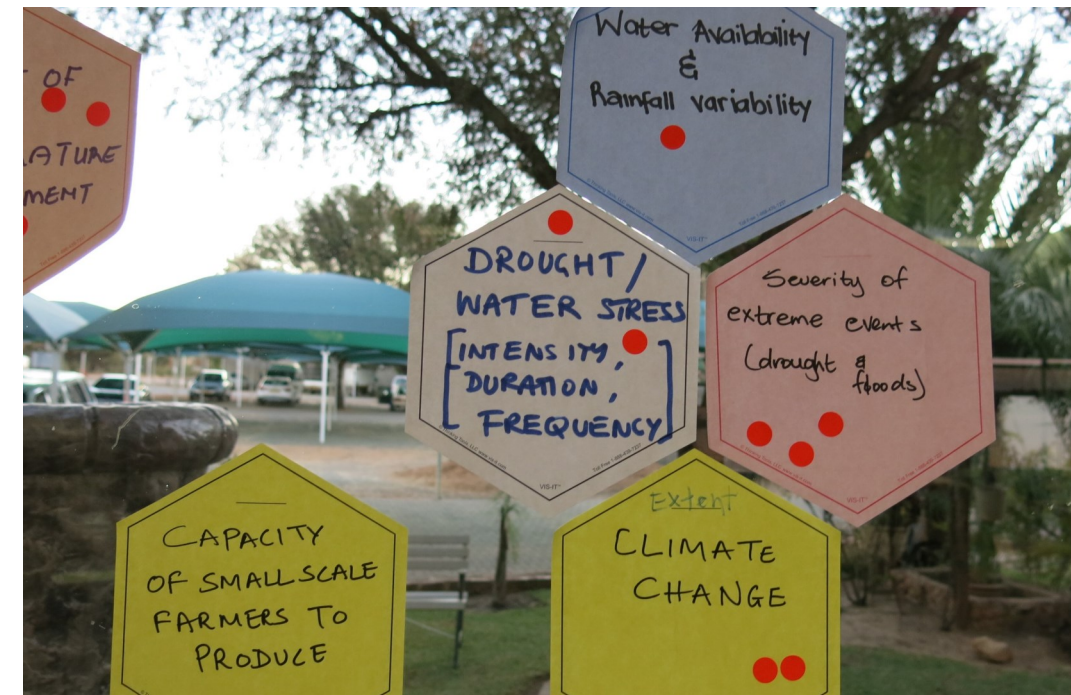
Over the years, TSP has been used in a variety of contexts (including food, land reform, health, democracy, education, health), but mostly at a national or regional level. And most often a champion from the system itself has approached Reos Partners to undertake the process.

ASSAR presented an opportunity for us at Reos Partners to try out TSP in a very different context. Some of the core differences were that it was built into the proposal submission as one of the main stakeholder engagement tools to be implemented in all of the ASSAR regions (which meant the regions themselves weren't eliciting the approach), and was likely to be implemented at a local or district level, rather than at a national level. The resources allocated to this component were constrained, so ASSAR and Reos Partners needed to innovate the process. Reos Partners agreed to play a capacity building role (i.e. capacitating the regional leads to take on a lot of the preparation of the TSP processes) and limit our main input to the design and facilitation of the workshops and provide guidance to the scenario writing process.

**The TSP workshops helped stakeholders to question their current understanding of problems and their role in being part of solutions. Shifts in thinking concerned a heightened awareness of the need to build trusting relationships in order to be more open to doing things differently.**

Teresa Perez, research fellow at the University of Cape Town, has already done a significant amount of reflection and analysis on the value and impact of the TSP process within ASSAR, and we will have an opportunity to harvest our collective learnings before the completion of the entire project. That being said, there are two insights that stand out for me at this stage. There were participants in all three regions (which are all contextually and culturally very different) who found the process valuable. For example, the workshops helped stakeholders to question their current understanding of problems and their role in being part of solutions. Shifts in thinking concerned a heightened awareness of the need to build trusting relationships in order to be more open to doing things differently. What this tells me is that 1) the approach is indeed potentially suitable and relevant for a wide range of contexts and scales; and 2) that a more discrete TSP process can still have impact and relevance.

<sup>1</sup> See Adam Kahane, "Transformative Scenario Planning: Working Together to Change the Future" (Oakland: Berrett-Koehler, 2012).



There is a great deal that we still have to learn about how to adapt the methodology in context- and resource-constrained situations (in particular, the time and effort of developing and producing scenarios as communication outcomes), but we would like to commend ASSAR and the regional teams for taking the risk, and for forging relationships and trust with a diverse group across regions. And in so doing, finding innovative and creative ways of successfully delivering TSPs in their regions.

## Five Steps of TSP

1. Convene a team from the whole system

2. Observe what is happening

3. Construct stories about what could happen

4. Discover what can and must be done

5. Act to transform the system

Source: Kahane



# Workshops can challenge stereotypes and change perceptions

By **Teresa Perez**, ASSAR Research Fellow, University of Cape Town

When I first started researching development projects in 2011, it was well established that community participation in decision-making was a must (although exactly who ‘the community’ referred to was ambiguous). Despite the advocacy of participatory development since the 1990s, I was surprised to see how little has changed: it remains very easy to ignore people who are located – geographically and socially – on the margins.

TSP workshops acted as a reminder that although involving more people slows down decision-making in planning processes, it is nevertheless important. In my research at ASSAR workshops last year, for some attendees the most valuable thing was that the workshops challenged hierarchical conventions and demonstrated what planning collectively might look like. What remained more difficult, though, was knowing how to conduct workshops in a way that enabled everyone to participate equally, regardless of language spoken or level of education.

Fundamental to the TSP process is that it aims to attract people with a sphere of influence. This means workshops largely involved people who were likely to already be part of an existing form of community consultation. Anyone who cannot afford to take time off from their multiple daily responsibilities (child care, housework, livelihood activities) would be unlikely to attend.

**An unintended consequence of TSP is that it entrenches the existing power of gatekeepers, by relying on people in positions of influence rather than seeking out the involvement of ‘hard to reach’ populations.**

The workshops were designed to be inclusive of different perspectives, but activities were explained in English (albeit with translation) and involved significant amounts of reading. They were fast paced because of the need to complete numerous activities in order to reach a specific goal at the end of two days. This would have made it difficult for people who are illiterate, monolingual or have learning disabilities to fully participate, had they been invited.

However, unlike conventional participatory processes, TSP is not designed as community engagement or to ensure the inclusion of marginalised voices. Instead, these perspectives were voiced indirectly via representatives.

Therefore, an unintended consequence of TSP is that it entrenches the existing power of gatekeepers, by relying on people in positions of influence rather than seeking out the involvement of ‘hard to reach’ populations. (This stands in contrast to the approach taken by the ASSAR East Africa team who did not use TSP.)



**View from the workshop venue in Botswana: the team at the University of Botswana went to great lengths to find a venue that was near to the local community and away from the trappings that affluent stakeholders may be used to.**

**By questioning why we do things the way we do, individuals were made to reflect on their existing assumptions about planning, decision making, and their place in the social system.**

However, the TSP process was a work-in-progress, significantly modified for each ASSAR location in light of the demands of the context and lessons learnt in ASSAR workshops over 2016/17.

What remained a constant throughout was the use of scenarios, which the ASSAR team hoped would change peoples’ knowledge and understanding of issues related to climate change adaptation. To a limited extent this happened, but there is far more evidence that workshops enabled individuals to think differently about planning in general.

By questioning why we do things the way we do, individuals were made to reflect on their existing assumptions about planning, decision making, and their place in the social system. This is in line with TSP’s notion of transformation as a method to change stakeholders understanding, rather than more academic definitions that assume transformation to be a paradigm shift.

For example, stereotypes about the centrality of experts and climate science, the limited agency of local people, and the notion that nothing can change without a government official, were all brought into question as a result of participation in the TSP process. The TSP process within ASSAR therefore contributes to existing academic and non-academic literature, which argues that changing perceptions is key to effective climate change adaptation.

My research in 2018 will focus on the extent to which these changes to individuals enabled people to collaborate in ways that they may not have considered before. Watch this space!

**The TSP process within ASSAR contributes to existing academic and non-academic literature, which argues that changing perceptions is key to effective climate change adaptation.**



# Attempting to transform the future – reflections from the TSP process in Bangalore

By **Prathigna Poonacha**

Researcher, Indian Institute for Human Settlements

Water in Bangalore is in crisis. Multiple issues plague this water system, including trying to meet the ever-increasing water demands of a growing population. There is pollution and contamination – of ground and surface water. There is also the problem of encroachment and mismanagement of lakes and storm-water drains resulting in urban flooding at every extreme rainfall event.

These issues are not new to the city and many configurations of solutions and interventions have been tried.

- Civic authorities responsible for water supply are trying hard to tap into newer sources of water for the city.
- Many citizen groups are initiating action around lake restoration, rejuvenation and management.
- The government recently cracked down on much of the encroachments on storm-water drains in the city.
- Rainwater harvesting has been mandated for all buildings under law.

Yet, the scale of these problems requires coordinated action, as piecemeal solutions do not provide substantial relief.

**The truth is we are stuck! A systems approach is required to understand and address the water problems of the city – an approach that recognises how natural and social systems work together.**

The TSP process offered us a method to think through this problematic situation using a systems lens. It also offered us the opportunity to bring the multiplicity and diversity of water stakeholders together in conversation with one another, to identify important drivers of this problem and then to work together towards transformative futures for the city.

The TSP process was undertaken by the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) for a period of almost 18 months and is still ongoing.

It included three workshops. The first was a training workshop held in October 2016 to understand the TSP method and the appetite for such a process among water stakeholders in Bangalore. The second and third were part of the actual TSP process. The workshops were titled 'Water and you – Bangalore's future?' and held in July and December 2017 respectively. We engaged with more than 25 stakeholders from the government, academia, non-governmental organisations, private sector, citizen and community-based groups.

# South ASIA

As organisers and conveners of the process, it was a tremendously enriching experience for us. But the process was not without its challenges. I reflect here on the top three challenges we faced in the course of this journey:

## Getting the right people in the room (Who convenes the process?)

While TSP offers a lens to think systemically around an issue, it is important to bring people into the room that represent the entirety of the system. In our case, it included representatives from government, academia, civil society, media, the private sector, businesses, activists, and so on. However, getting the government officials into the room, many of whom were the most important stakeholders, was a challenge for us. There are multiple government institutions who are stakeholders of the water system in Bangalore. While we invited almost all institutions to participate in the process, either there was a lack of interest on their part or a lack of time to participate. It is important to note that a lack of capacity (both in terms of numbers and ability to engage) is a serious governance issue in our context. I think some of this has to do with who we are as an institution convening the process and I hazard a guess that we may have had much more participation had we been another government organisation.

In terms of participation from other groups, though, such as civil society or academia, we had a good response as IIHS is regarded as a neutral space for difficult conversations.

## Time-consuming process

A full TSP process is run over a period of 24 to 36 months. In the 'lite' version of TSP adapted for ASSAR, we took about 18 months to conduct three workshops. Engaging the same set of stakeholders for such long periods of time is particularly challenging, especially where 'once-off, one-day' workshops are the flavour of the day. This requires serious and sustained commitment from both the participating stakeholders and the organisers. In this process, it is desirable to have the same set of stakeholders attend both the workshops. In our second workshop, we had about half the number of participants who attended the first one. Ensuring that most participants attended the second workshop was challenging given that many of them prioritised other commitments over this. As a result, the continuity and engagement with the process as well as the depth of relationships among stakeholders was diluted.

## What next?

**(Self-transformation is not enough! We need tangible and perceivable outcomes)**

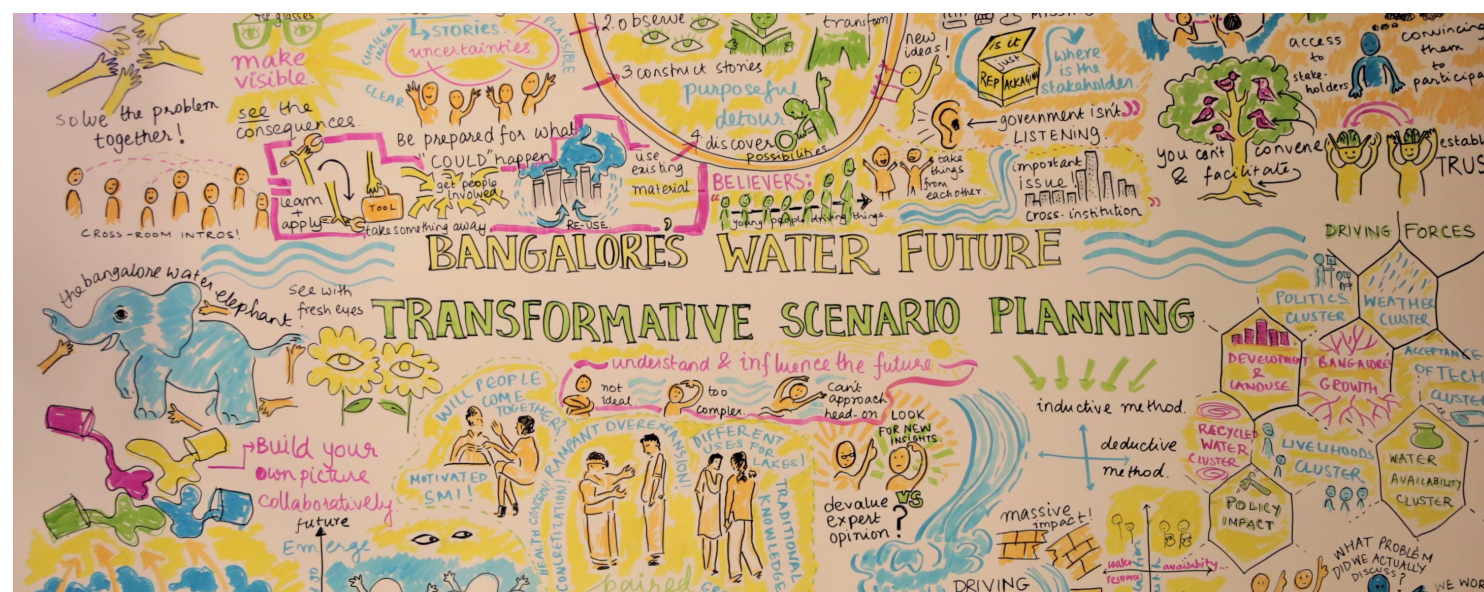
The TSP process offers transformation in five areas as its outcome: a) Language, b) Understanding, c) Relationships, d) Intentions, and e) Actions. It proposes that transformation in the first three areas causes a shift in participants' will to act (intentions) in a stuck situation and therefore transforms their abilities to act and better the situation. The second day of the second and last workshops ended with stakeholders voicing the actions they would like to take in order to realise the desired future they had articulated in the course of the process.

But many in the group later expressed that after the lengthy TSP process they would have liked to see some tangible action in the present, rather than the possibility of action in the future.

Perhaps this shortcoming would have been partially addressed had there been better representation of government, since government has the agency to decide and implement some of the recommendations that were made by the other stakeholders. This articulation, however, also reflects a tinge of frustration among stakeholders about an 'all talk and no work approach', and points to the urgency of the situation.

Finally, for us as convenors, this experience is full of richness and learning, despite any shortcomings in the way we put it together.

**The most important takeaway is that the TSP process is only the beginning of what needs to be a long and deep engagement on the issue of water in Bangalore. All stakeholders need to be on board, if we are to realise a desirable, sustainable and liveable future for the city.**



Graphic recording of the process

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# WOTR's experience of organising and facilitating the TSP process in Jalna

By the TSP facilitation team  
Watershed Organisation Trust

Jalna is a drought-prone district in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra, India, that frequently faces serious water challenges. This water shortage is a major issue for the people and local authorities and, as a result, in June 2017 the Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR) initiated a TSP process in the Jalna district called 'The Water Situation in Rural Jalna in 2030: for Domestic and Livelihood Needs'.

Forty stakeholder representatives from across Jalna – farmers from all landholding categories, landless poor, women, members of the Grampanchayat, farmer movements, government officials, a water sector scientist, academic institutions, college students, NGOs and media – participated actively, voicing their varied concerns and perspectives about the district's water situation. The TSP process was applied for the first time in Maharashtra, facilitated by WOTR in the local language. It was an exciting experience for the facilitators, as much as there was anxiety and concern, since there was no TSP expert from Reos Partners to fall back on.

The following are key observations, experiences, and learning we gathered through the two workshops of the process:

**1. The WOTR team's active participation in the ASSAR TSP workshop at the IIHS, Bangalore, was important for our understanding of the TSP concept and process.** Each day, we discussed the application of each step to the Jalna context, and also mapped the potential challenges and steps to make it workable in a rural setting. Close interaction with Karen Goldberg from Reos Partners during the events, as well as Skype interactions, contributed greatly. The exposure to the Bangalore TSP process provided us with adequate clarity and confidence to apply this process in another language and region.

**2. Identifying the title/theme of the TSP is crucial.** It needs to be a burning topic that affects the majority of rural areas in the district. It also needs to be specific and focused. Our facilitation team gave adequate time for this process. A 'reference group' was formed consisting of a district government officer, a water expert, a representative of an agriculture training institute and an NGO. The reference group members were also active in identifying the specific stakeholders who are affected by and engaging with the topic in the

real-life situation. The reference group stated that even formulating the topic of the TSP was enlightening and they enjoyed participating in the open and frank discussions.

**3. Although engaging government officials throughout the process was challenging, we did achieve some success at least in helping them realise that they are key stakeholders and that their engagement is essential, even as early in the process as identifying the burning theme.** Besides them being involved in the reference group, we also had a good representation of government officials at the first TSP workshop; this, however, was reduced to only one representative at the second TSP workshop. Nevertheless, we've been active in providing them with feedback and reporting on both workshops, in order to get greater buy-in when the time for action comes.

**4. The biggest challenge the facilitation team faced was translating and interpreting specific concepts and terms of the TSP methodology into Marathi, the local language, so that it was easily understood by all participants, including villagers.** Intensive effort and much work was put in by the facilitating team to arrive at the appropriate word/question/explanation – all in simple and easily-understood Marathi.

**5. The mode of discussions, and viewing all participants on the same social level (although for cultural reasons one could not use first names), worked very well – everyone participated actively, sharing opinions, experiences and concerns.** Even village women were actively involved and listened to. To prepare the models of different scenarios we used simple local material like differently-coloured chart paper and sheets, modelling clay, crayons, coloured sketch pens, scissors and glue (rather than the Lego used in other contexts). The participants found these materials easy to use to develop creative scenarios which could be easily understood by members of other groups. This was an important lesson considering the general rural background of the participants.

**The biggest challenge was translating and interpreting specific TSP concepts into Marathi, the local language.**

# South ASIA



**6. Using role play to present scenarios is a powerful way to share opinions and experiences, while evoking issues of relevance.** The participants were very familiar with using this method to present real-life experiences about specific scenarios.

**7. What was particularly rewarding was the discussions between participants outside the 'workshop' sessions – even late into the night.** They were all active and eager to continue discussions with people they had not met before the workshop. Their 'discovery' of key aspects that emerged during the second workshop gives hope. As one man shared: "We have never thought about what should be avoided. We just take up ideas without considering the negative side." A woman shared: "When we face drought, it is at those times we take action to survive. It is important, though, that we take proactive measures to conserve and harvest water and use water judiciously even in a year of normal rainfall. If we do that, the impact of drought will not be as severe."

**8. The last important stage of the TSP methodology is for us to take this process forward towards action.** This is a crucial step and relies on the level of interest and commitment of other stakeholders throughout the process.

For our facilitation team, it was very exciting to organise and facilitate a TSP process in a local language for the

first time. There was a lot of engagement and openness to learn and contribute during the process. There was a willingness to listen to one another and make modifications to our facilitation as appropriate. The different strengths of our team members complemented each other well and helped to fill any gaps.

The entire team was focused on achieving the same outcome: engaging all participants towards a common dream, and being hopeful that through further action we can make a positive difference together.

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# Deciding the future of agriculture in Upper West: the case of Transformative Scenario Planning in Ghana

By **Prince Ansah and Rahinatu S. Alare**  
Technical Officers, University of Ghana

In the Upper West Region of Ghana, agriculture is the main livelihood activity for more than 90% of households. In recent times, crop farming has become a challenge for smallholder farmers in the region due to increasing droughts, dry spells, and erratic rainfall caused by climate change. This has deepened food insecurity in the region. It is estimated that over two million people in Ghana are vulnerable to becoming food insecure in the near future. Of this number, according to the World Food Programme more than 450,000 people are already food insecure with 34% of them living in Upper West Region.

ASSAR Ghana is focused on strengthening failing agriculture productivity in the region through intensification of agriculture systems.

Prior to the first workshop, the ASSAR Ghana team went through a rigorous process with reference group members to select the right stakeholders to be part of this process. Even though inadequate resources meant that not all the intended institutions could be present, there was fair representation from almost all relevant sectors that support and promote agriculture and adaptation activities in the region.

The TSP process provided the right participatory methodology to explore the potential of

agriculture in the region. The process provided a good platform for stakeholders involved in climate change adaptation and agriculture to discuss the future of agriculture in the face of harsh climatic conditions.

The diverse stakeholders – who had different expertise and who represented institutions and communities – worked closely together in two separate workshops in Wa within a period of six months.

The first workshop focused on defining the major issues confronting agriculture in the region and on building four future scenarios around these issues. The second workshop allowed stakeholders to follow up on these scenarios, and led them to the proposal of five key strategies for addressing agriculture and climate change in the region.

The TSP process became a memorable event for many stakeholders, as it was the first time that such a diverse group of participants had sat together in a room to discuss and plan the future for agriculture.

**The TSP process provided a good platform for stakeholders involved in climate change adaptation and agriculture to discuss the future of agriculture in the face of harsh climatic conditions.**

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# West AFRICA

This is what Naa (Dr.) Ernest Sangsor-Tulong, the Vice President of the Nandom Traditional Council and a planning lecturer at the University of Development Studies, Ghana, had to say:

**“I learnt new approaches to solving problems. It is a transformational approach and quite different from the normal planning processes we know. This is more practical and it gives stakeholders the opportunity to share exactly what they see and feel about agriculture and food security in the region”.**

Peter Shiloh, a farm business advisor for both Lawra and Nandom districts also shared how he intends using the knowledge gained from the TSP process:

**“The processes of trying to think out of the box when one is confronted with challenges has given me insights why some projects are successful while**

**others are not. This is because they try to predict the future. As a field worker who works directly with farmers, I will try to apply this new knowledge to some of the challenges farmers face in crop production by mapping out potential challenges and ways of addressing them.”**

The TSP process became a learning tool in different ways.

As a participatory approach, it had the ability to integrate diverse and often opposing views across the spectrum to agree on specific issues affecting our study area.

The process was seen as a solution-oriented qualitative research method that explored both current and future situations of agriculture and food security and plans to address these. However, some felt that the TSP outcomes lacked quantitative backing as the predictions for the future are based on stakeholder assumptions.



Photo by Prosper Adiku



# Pathways for adaptive change: Insight from scenario outcomes in Mali

By **Edmond Totin, Amadou Sidibe** and **Mary Thompson-Hall**

Researchers, ASSAR West Africa

Mali is one of the dryland countries exposed to critical and increasingly complex socio-environmental challenges, including population growth and urbanisation, which intersect with extreme climate events and generate shocks for livelihoods and food systems.

We ran two TSP workshops in Koutiala District, one of the climatically stressed regions of Mali, to enable people to anticipate plausible future challenges and accordingly design better-informed interventions.

Koutiala is one of the main agricultural production areas in Mali, and 80% of the economically-active population in this region is engaged in agriculture. However, Koutiala is stressed by a fast-growing population and increasing pressure on scarce natural resources. The region is also exposed to sporadic droughts and floods which makes the region's agriculture activities highly vulnerable to climate variability and change.

The TSP process brought together stakeholders with different expertise, knowledge and values across national and subnational levels.

We developed scenarios to address the question: **“What should agriculture and food security look like by 2035 to support livelihood improvement in Koutiala, under conditions of climate change?”**

As a first step, 24 participants, including district officials, NGO staffs, village leaders and public servants, were asked to identify factors they thought could be important in driving changes in agriculture, food security and living conditions in the district by 2035. In a next step, storylines were developed in four groups, using the two most uncertain and influential drivers future changes to construct a scenario for the district in 2035: access to agricultural land and access to water for irrigation.

Based on the analysis of socio-economic conditions of the district, a no-regret option was selected and a set of piloting activities was accordingly designed by the scenario participants to strengthen their adaptive capacity. Activities were developed at both subnational (e.g. training of community members on rainwater harvesting and soil fertility management) and national (e.g. policy lobbying) levels.

The project team supported the community members to develop two proposals for local adaptation grants.

The first proposal is titled “Building young women’s resilience to climate change by connecting them to strategic opportunities”, which hypothesizes that creating reliable market opportunities for young women could inject much needed income into some of the poorest food-insecure rural households. This research is taking a small group of about 14 young women from seven villages of Koutiala through a process of action and learning about their own interactions can change the institutional configurations of which they are part. The activities have the explicit aim of linking them to remunerative opportunities and increasing their adaptive capacities.

In parallel, outcomes of the district-scenarios workshop informed discussions about sustainable agricultural development, which is critical to guarantee food security for the growing population in Mali. The information generated was subsequently used to inform National Parliament Members about the challenges faced by farmers in accessing short duration and quality seed, which is a major barrier to agricultural intensification.

In Mali, seed production, distribution and use are regulated by the new agricultural development framework, Loi d’Orientation Agricole. Despite this, more than 80% of the seed used still comes from the “unregulated” traditional seed systems, partly because farmers find the certification process expensive. Therefore, although farmers register as seed producers, they often continue engaging through informal networks, which affects crop yields and undermines efforts to promote improved varieties and to adapt to the changing agricultural conditions.

We conducted regular follow-up sessions on – six and 12 months after the completion of the TSP workshops – to monitor social changes that may have resulted from the scenario planning against key attributes of TSP as highlighted in the literature. Many scenario participants stressed their new-found capacity to better understand what climate change is and how to take action for a better future.

**“Going through the scenario process and visualising what the community could be by 2035, helped us to start taking actions already, to prepare for future events.”**

Participants agreed that the scenario workshops helped them to create new relationships, to get to know new

# West AFRICA



people, and stimulated changes to practice. Mrs Kadiatou Dembele a journalist from the community radio, said:

**“I am very happy that the scenario took us through the exploration of plausible future . Because I have been exposed to this exercise, I changed my programme line at the radio and now I try to sensitise the community to actions for a better future. I developed a specific radio show that encourages trees planting and efficient use of natural resources. This kind of action can help to prevent resource degradation and climate hazard.”**

Further evaluation activities will continue in the course of the implementation of the adaptation grants to access changes that emerge from the scenario processes.

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# Using TSP to think differently about the future of land use in Bobirwa, Botswana

By **Julia Davies**

Senior Research Assistant, University of Cape Town

**What is the future of land use in Bobirwa sub-district up to the year 2035?**

**How do land-use challenges in this region intersect with issues of human-wildlife conflict?**

**What can and must we do to adapt to change, and to achieve the future that we desire?**

These are some of the questions that were addressed during the TSP process in Botswana, which comprised of two workshops, held in October 2017 and January 2018 at the Oasis Lodge, Zanzibar.

Whilst human-wildlife conflict and optimal land utilisation do not fit neatly into any of ASSAR's research themes, it was evident that these issues were of pressing concern to local communities in the Bobirwa Sub-District.

With this in mind, the ASSAR team and Reos Partners, along with the local stakeholders, agreed that we would use the TSP methodology to address these concerns, albeit with an understanding of the broader STEEP (Social, Technological, Environmental, Economic and Political) context within which these issues play out.

In Bobirwa, people's concerns about land use stem from the misunderstanding that communal (open access) land is less fertile than freehold (privately owned) land. However, the difference in productivity actually lies in the manner in which freehold land is managed, as opposed to the fertility of the soil itself.

Through the TSP workshops, people were able to better understand this. For instance, a 'grassroots' woman reflected that she had learnt from other stakeholders about how she could

improve her farming methods to ensure better crop productivity and thus food and livelihood security.

Moreover, one of the 'action points' identified at the end of the TSP process was to encourage communities to adopt new and improved farming methods such as Climate Smart Agriculture.

However, stakeholders felt that the success of such methods may be limited if the problem of human-wildlife conflict was not adequately addressed. This issue is of primary concern for small-scale and subsistence farmers, whose crops are frequently destroyed by elephants, and for local villagers whose lives are endangered by wildlife.

**"That which we do together, is likely to be successful."**

*- Setswana saying*

The TSP process brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, helped them to see key issues with fresh eyes, provided a tool with which to develop plausible scenarios of the future and motivated them to consider what actions are within their control or spheres of influence.

However, for people to begin acting in new ways that shift them toward a more desirable future, it is imperative that local stakeholders take ownership of the problems and the processes beyond the TSP.

Key to this is relationship building and the establishment of networks. As such, one participant reflected on a saying in Setswana, which translates to "that which we do together, is likely to be successful".

# Southern AFRICA



A key objective of the TSP was therefore to build the group's capacity for longer term collaboration.

One way in which this was achieved was to ensure, through continuous translation between English and Setswana, that all stakeholders understood and could participate thoroughly in the workshop process. Much of the collaborative effort came from stakeholders themselves who, despite some initial dynamics of power, showed great respect and patience when engaging with one another.

At a more practical level, some of the action points that stakeholders identified for moving beyond the workshops included things like staying in touch with each other, conducting community debriefings in local villages, engaging with local authorities and arranging follow-up meetings.

**It is our hope that the seeds of change that have been planted through the TSP will be watered by ongoing collaboration amongst local stakeholders, and ultimately produce the fruits of wellbeing, resilience and transformation.**

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# Imagining the future of water for productive use in Namibia's Omusati Region

By **Cecil Togarepi**

Researcher, University of Namibia

In the semi-arid regions of northern Namibia, floods and droughts are regular events. However, their severity has increased with the changing climate. The consequences to subsistence and small-scale farmers have been grave in the Omusati Region.

Working with a diverse group of relevant stakeholders over two workshops in February and July 2017, ASSAR's Southern Africa team implemented the TSP process to imagine what might happen to the provision of water for productive use in the Omusati region of Namibia by the year 2035.



*Stakeholders voted on what activities should be prioritised and subsequently discussed what actions they might take to achieve the desired outcomes.*

The workshop participant list was dominated by decision-makers – those that have influence or planning roles in different sectors related to water and food security and climate change. Thus representatives of traditional authorities, farmers, farmers associations, hydrology, water regulators,

environmental regulators, disaster risk management, councillors, and regional and local government leadership as well as researchers were selected. We found TSP to be a very useful tool for the Omusati Region as it brought together people who wouldn't often be in the same place.

**TSP enables people to work together on an equal footing with no levels of hierarchy, and opens an avenue of accepting everyone's point of view.**

The TSP process was centred on the topics of political will and the impact of drought on securing water in this region. It enabled people to work together on an equal footing with no levels of hierarchy, and opened an avenue of accepting everyone's point of view. It suggested that the future might not be controlled by individuals and that collective planning is needed. It also brought new insights, especially for how the same problem could be addressed and looked at holistically.

The diversity of ideas that came up would not have been achieved had it not been for TSP. Different people, depending on their backgrounds, perceive problems differently and apply different methods to addressing issues. However, with TSP the issues had to be separated from individual backgrounds and influences and considered instead in the way events might play out.

The relationships built over the course of these workshops will determine what happens next. The stakeholders and ASSAR team members need to find a way to continue what was set in motion during the workshops, and start implementing the ideas and objectives. The ASSAR team will look into scheduling an additional workshop to support these ongoing collaborative efforts, and to keep working towards a future where people in Omusati have access to water for productive use, regardless of the effects of climate change.

# Southern AFRICA



**“TSP is an eye opener for planning both in a working environment and personal life. It promotes a sense of ownership because everyone feels part of the entire process. TSP encourages preservation and makes monitoring easier as everyone wants to see the success of each story. TSP helps you to think critically of what you want to achieve.”**

– Hon Modestus Amutse, Chairperson of Omusati Regional Council

**“TSP is a good method of planning with different sectors to change the future. It helped me understand the system in which I am working and relationship between different sectors. TSP can be used by planners and managers who are keen to transform their organisations by bringing up the change they would like to see in the future.”**

– Mr Silvanus Uunona, Hydrologist, Ministry of Agriculture Water and Forestry

**“TSP is a good method for proper planning of the present and the future. TSP has opened up my thinking about the things that can happen and we have no control over and also to be able to let go of beliefs that may not be necessarily of what might happen. I will be able to apply TSP in my short and long term plans.”**

– Elizabeth Ndivaye, Chief Marine Biologist, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources

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# ABOUT ASSAR

## WHY WE FOCUS ON SEMI-ARID REGIONS

As the global impacts of climate change become more clearly understood, so too does the need for people to effectively respond and adapt to these changes. Home to hundreds of millions of people, the semi-arid regions of Africa and Asia are particularly vulnerable to climate-related impacts and risks. These climate-change hot-spots are highly dynamic systems that already experience harsh climates, adverse environmental change, and a relative paucity of natural resources. People here may be further marginalised by high levels of poverty and rapidly changing socio-economic, governance and development contexts. Although many people in these regions already display remarkable resilience, these multiple and often interlocking pressures are expected to amplify in the coming decades. Therefore, it is essential to understand how to empower people, local organisations and governments to adapt to climate change in a way that minimises vulnerability and promotes long-term resilience.



To date, most adaptation efforts have focused on reactive, short-term and site-specific solutions to climate-related vulnerabilities. Although important, these responses often fail to address the root causes of vulnerability, nor shed light on how to proactively spur larger-scale and longer-term adaptation that has positive effects on socio-economic development. Using both research and practice to address this information shortfall, ASSAR (Adaptation in Semi-Arid Regions) seeks to produce future-focused and societally-relevant knowledge of potential pathways to wellbeing through adaptation.

## Our research framework

ASSAR's overarching research objective is to use insights from multiple-scale, interdisciplinary work to improve the understanding of the barriers, enablers and limits to effective, sustained and widespread adaptation out to the 2030s. Working in a coordinated manner across seven countries in India, East Africa, West Africa and Southern Africa, ASSAR's research is case study based and strives to integrate climatic, environmental, social and economic change. The dynamics of gender roles and relations form a particularly strong theme throughout our approach.

Each of ASSAR's teams conducts regionally-relevant research focused on specific socio-ecological risks/dynamics that relate centrally to livelihood transitions, and access, use and management of land and water resources in water-stressed environments. Focal research themes in each region are: agro-intensification in West Africa; land and water access in East and Southern Africa; and land use, land cover and livelihood changes in India.

Over its five-year lifespan (2014-2018), the cross-regional comparison and integration of research findings will enable ASSAR to develop a unique and systemic understanding of the processes and factors that impede adaptation and cause vulnerability to persist.

## Putting our work in practice

To ensure that project case studies are aligned with the needs and realities of those living and working in semi-arid regions, and to increase the chances that findings and recommendations are taken up, ASSAR builds relationships with a wide spectrum of stakeholders from communities, civil society organisations, research institutions, governments and non-governmental organisations.

By guiding stakeholders through participatory scenario planning processes ASSAR aims to build a common understanding of current adaptation needs and past adaptation failings, while promoting the co-production of adaptation responses that can yield appropriate, tangible and lasting benefits. By using stakeholder mapping and analysis to better understand the power dynamics of different stakeholder groups, by working with and alongside boundary organisations and the private sector, and by engaging in effective communication, capacity building and advocacy campaigns, ASSAR seeks to inform and promote sustainable development pathways that have the best prospect for enhancing the wellbeing of the most vulnerable and/or marginalised in the coming decades.

Through these activities, ASSAR will better integrate the domains of adaptation research, policy and practice. By building the adaptive capacity of primary stakeholders, policy and decision makers, practitioners, boundary organisations, and academic researchers, this integration could bring about previously inconceivable strategies for change and transformation. In time these efforts could also contribute to a change in the attitudes and behaviours of key stakeholders, prompt easier and better access to resources by vulnerable groups, and enhance the power and agency of vulnerable groups to lessen or remove adaptation barriers, and exploit adaptation enablers.

## ANIMATED THEORY OF CHANGE



Photos (L-R): Salma Hegga, Poshendra Satyal, Tali Hoffman



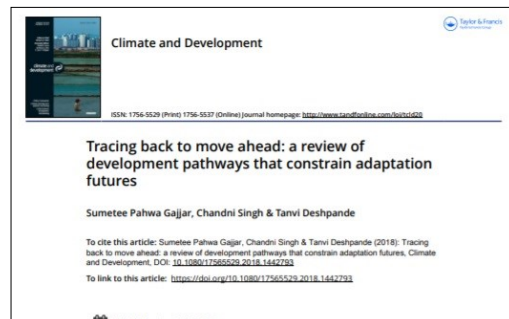
# ASSAR OUTPUTS

A selection of our 2017/2018 outputs. For more information see the [ASSAR website](#).



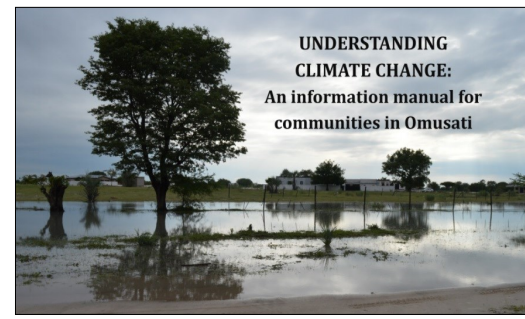
## Adaptation booklet

Adaptation as innovation: Lessons from smallholder farmers in India's rainfed Karnataka (in [English](#) and [Kannada](#))



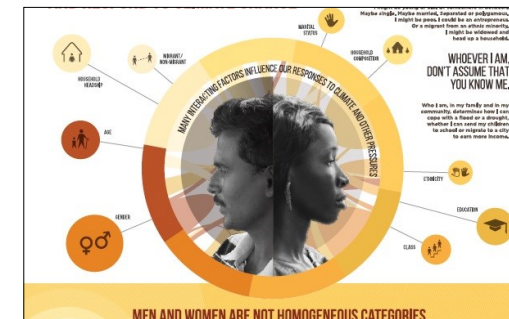
## Journal article

Tracing back to move ahead: a review of development pathways that constrain adaptation futures



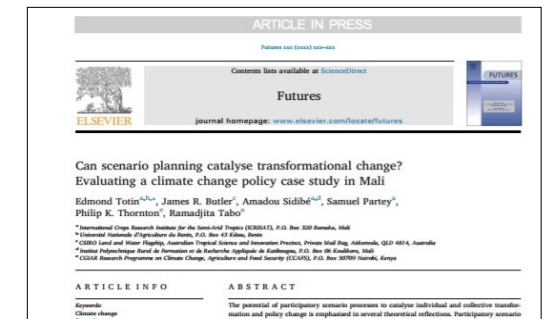
## Adaptation booklet

Understanding climate change: An information manual for communities in Omusati, Namibia (in [English](#) and [Oshiwambo](#))



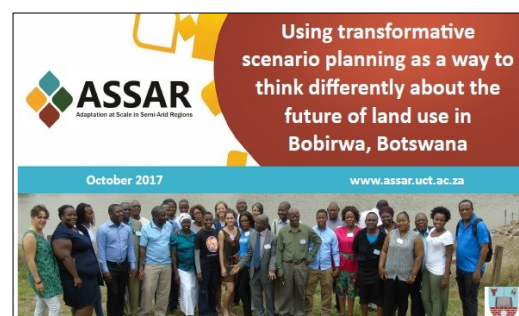
## Infographics

A collection of infographics focused on gender and social differentiation



## Journal article

Can scenario planning catalyse transformational change? Evaluating a climate change policy case study in Mali



## Information brief

Using transformative scenario planning as a way to think differently about the future of land use in Bobirwa, Botswana (in [English](#) and [Setswana](#))



## Information brief

Climate change impacts and adaptation in north-central Namibia (in [English](#) and [Oshiwambo](#))



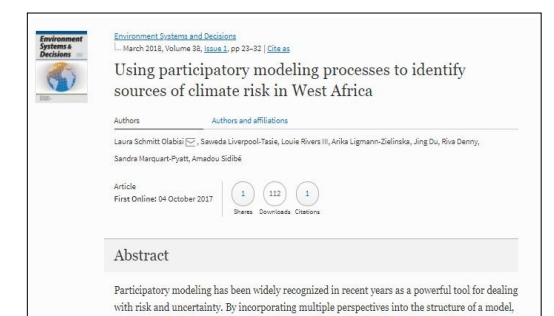
## Journal article

Mental models of food security in rural Mali



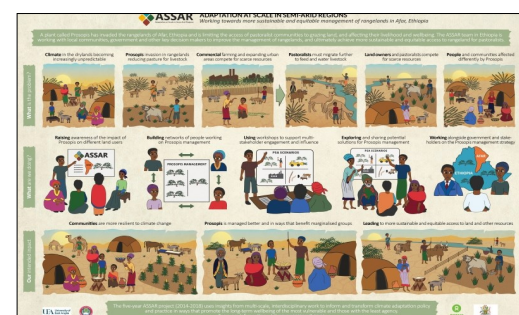
## Journal article

Multi-scale governance in agriculture systems: Interplay between national and local institutions around the production dimension of food security in Mali



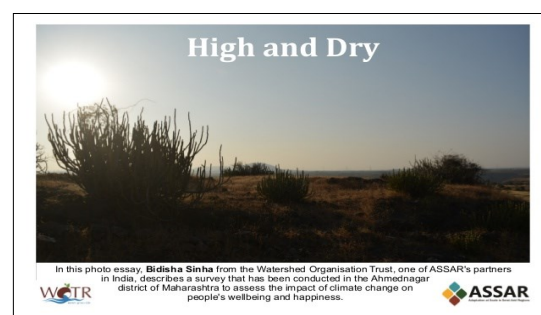
## Journal article

Using participatory modeling processes to identify sources of climate risk in West Africa



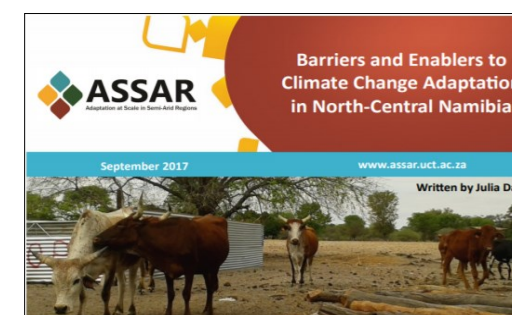
## Illustrated impact pathway

Managing Ethiopia's invasive plant species



## Photo essay

High and Dry: the impact of climate change on people's wellbeing in the Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra



## Information brief

Barriers and enablers to climate change in north-central Namibia



## Journal article

Using life histories to understand temporal vulnerability to climate change in highly dynamic contexts



## Information brief

Using transformative scenario planning to think critically about the future of water in rural Jalna, India



# ASSAR PARTNERS

The international and interdisciplinary ASSAR team comprises a mix of research and practitioner organisations, and includes groups with global reach as well as those deeply embedded in their communities.

## LEAD ORGANISATIONS



## PARTNER ORGANISATIONS



## CARIAA PROGRAMME

ASSAR is one of four hot-spot research projects in the Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia (CARIAA) programme, funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID).

