



# CBA<sup>15</sup>

Local solutions inspiring  
global action

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## CBA15 talking points

The CBA15 online conference took place from 14-18<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Participants joined from over 70 countries to share their experiences from implementing adaptation projects, and to discuss new ideas and perspectives on how to amplify community adaptation priorities in international and national spaces. The conference had five themes, each organised around one leading question:

1. **Climate finance:** what does improved access to climate finance look like at the local level and what do different actors need to do to achieve the change we urgently need?
2. **Innovation for adaptation:** how can we build partnerships that prioritise and sustain community-led innovation?
3. **Responsive policy:** how can policy from local to global level be refocused so that it prioritises local action and local knowledge?
4. **Nature-based solutions for adaptation:** how can local communities drive nature-based solutions for resilient food systems?
5. **Youth inclusion:** how can we mainstream and scale up youth participation so that they can be equal and capable decision makers for community-based adaptation?

Several sessions engaged directly and indirectly with the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation — developed to ensure communities are empowered to lead local-level adaptation to climate change. Cross-cutting themes also included gender and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL). The key messages from the discussions were collected each day and are documented below. To find more information about the talking points, follow the links to videos and rapporteur notes from each session.

### Climate finance

- **Climate finance intermediaries must rethink their role:** these institutions — often the larger international agencies — must focus on building the capacities, networks, skills and knowledge of community-level institutions and local government authorities. For this to be possible, practitioners must intentionally design capacity bridging components in programmes that target community or local-level institutions so that they can stand on their own in future.

See sessions: [\*A better way: how climate finance can meet the needs of the vulnerable in urban areas\*](#); and [\*Principles for Locally Led Action 1 - How can we see them driving real impact?\*](#)

- **Funders must spend more time considering context:** communities are not homogenous and climate change impacts different people in different ways. For adaptation investments to be successful, time is needed at the beginning of projects to explore power dynamics within and between communities, working with the stakeholders central to the project. Doing so requires longer funding cycles.

See session: [\*Local efforts on financing climate adaptation and risk reduction: lessons from Asia and Africa\*](#)

- **Seed funding for climate adaptation programs at the community level** have proved to be an effective catalytic way for communities to build partnerships with wider stakeholders that can support

adaptation initiatives. However, to scale successful solutions for longer term investments, communities need to be equipped with knowledge and skills on funding access and program design by practitioners, local governments or peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

See session: [\*Challenges of scaling up and financing ecosystem-based adaptation in Africa: the role of innovation\*](#)

### Financing for bottom-up approaches

The Climate Bridge Fund is a trust fund established by BRAC with KfW, the German investment bank, support to deliver innovative, direct finance for climate adaptation and emergency response in urban areas of Bangladesh. Project concepts are developed to promote local nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs), and with direct inclusion of local communities and consultation of local authorities. Special efforts are made to ensure that local organisations can access the information needed to apply for funds.

### Innovation for adaptation

- **Multi-stakeholder partnerships are important for sustainability:** different actors, including governments, can innovate and advise to solve problems at different steps of a value chain or project implementation process. The local private sector is often neglected but can play a key role in sustaining impact if their interests can be recognised, or if they can be attracted through government incentives. Partnerships or collaborations should be based on respect for each other, cultures, people and planet, while also addressing the power relationships and dynamics within those partnerships.

See session: [\*Innovating to improve the ownership, sustainability and multi-actor nature of community-based adaptation. A discussion \(and challenge\) initiated with examples from Uganda and Nepal\*](#)

- **Communities can use their local knowledge to collect valuable data:** if communities are empowered to collect data, they can be more able to reflect their knowledge as well as intra-community differences in vulnerability or capacity — including across ages, genders, income levels and more. Community-led data places greater power in community hands and leads to innovation responding to their specific needs.

See session: [\*Innovation for adaptation by urban communities: the transformative power of citizen led data\*](#)

- **Climate Information Services (CIS) need to be user-centric:** recognising that communities are varied is key to ensuring greater use of CIS. Consultation is needed to explore different local information needs including technology, format and language. Feedback mechanisms should allow communities to suggest improvements. CIS should come through multiple channels, including with other information services to ensure the widest use — for example, it could be merged with extension services and market price information systems.

See session: [\*Innovative community engagement with Climate Information Services and early warning systems for flood resilience\*](#)

- **Indigenous knowledge can build resilience:** farmers are culturally and historically integrated into their context and so have longstanding knowledge, yet they are in competition rather than collaboration with new technologies. Yet technology could also help here — systemising the vast range of context-specific knowledge and making it searchable and usable. Donors and policymakers must seek to learn from communities through tools such as storytelling — and use innovative finance mechanisms that can support local knowledge to function in its own context.

See session: [\*Exploring how indigenous knowledge can drive innovation to deliver adaptation to climate change\*](#)

### Citizen-led data collection

Communities along seashores and rivers are at risk of storm surges, flooding, fire hazards and landslides. The Homeless People's Federation in the Philippines enabled communities to create maps of housing, land ownership and the nature of climate risk using GPS mapping tools, household surveys and focus group discussions. They created settlement profiles based on community understanding of the reality of informal settlements, which allowed the government to plan and institutionalise community slum upgrading based on real knowledge and improve city-level planning. Citizen-led data allowed them to push back against external decisions made by government 'professionals' — shifting the power to communities.

### Responsive policy

- **Urban poor and grassroots communities are innovative:** urban poor and grassroots communities, often led by women, have demonstrated their agency and resourcefulness, building on their existing networks to create responses to climate and other interconnected risks. These solutions can be resourced and scaled up by brokering partnerships with local governments and other institutions. Local communities should have proper access to units of local government in order to engage with them on preparing for future crises.

See session: [\*Voices from the Frontlines: resilience lessons from communities\*](#)

- **Local Indigenous knowledge has an important role to play:** affirmative action programmes and tools are needed that can bridge linguistic and cultural divides and enable local governments to integrate in-depth Indigenous knowledge held by communities into government planning. Local governments need autonomy and real decision-making powers to act on that knowledge.

See session: [\*How can we bridge the gap between indigenous knowledge and devolved local government decision making? The role of traditional knowledge for climate adaptation and local decision making\*](#)

- **Loss and damage must be prioritised:** there is an urgent need for developed countries to agree a plan of action on loss and damage from climate change — these are costs that cannot be avoided. Many are already undermining economic activities. Finance must be made accessible to compensate communities who cannot now adapt to the climate risks they face. This finance should prioritise approaches designed with strong involvement from and decisions made by vulnerable communities themselves.

See session: [\*Loss and Damage: On-the-ground experiences and youth demands\*](#)

- **Information and communications technologies have become useful tools in building resilient communities:** effective use of and access to assets, particularly ICT services in local languages, is crucial in enhancing community resilience and enabling communities to deal with future crises. However, their implementation must be done with care to avoid excluding those without access.

See session: [\*Exploring how indigenous knowledge can drive innovation to deliver adaptation to climate change\*](#)

### Innovative urban solutions

Tree Adoption Uganda, working in Bwaise, an informal settlement in Uganda, implemented a waste management and segregation project to address flooding. Communities were trained by local civil society organisations to collect waste that blocks drainage areas and produce charcoal briquettes for home use, or sell waste to private sector cooperatives and recycling businesses. The municipality was engaged to invest in drainage channels to deepen the impact. All groups meet to discuss issues and identify how new issues can be addressed on a regular basis. The project is showing that collaboration can ensure that local decision making can incorporate local knowledge as well as other types of stakeholders.

### Nature-based solutions

- **Nature-based solutions need to be locally based:** context is key to apply the right solutions in the right places. Articulating local and scientific knowledge together can ensure local people can shape adaptation responses. We must use dialogue to address the hierarchies of knowledge that currently exist and demonstrate that each knowledge system has value.

See session: [\*Putting communities in the driver's seat of NbS for climate resilient food systems\*](#)

- **Recognise and address power dynamics between different actors:** all actors' voices should be heard and all should have the opportunity to participate in the design and implementation of ecosystem-based adaptation approaches (EbA). Integrating Indigenous and local knowledge into communication about adaptation means grappling with the question of the different types and levels of power that existing between NGOs working in international development cooperation and politics more broadly. This also includes having difficult but important conversations about the role of the private sector in local settings — it needs to be included while respecting local priorities.

See session: [\*Ecosystem-based Adaptation \(EbA\) works! How can we effectively communicate about EbA and food security? Examples from India, South Africa, and Uganda\*](#)

- **Customise messages to diverse audiences:** our communication about EbA should be digestible and 'humanised'; connected to the everyday lives and needs of our audiences, who should include a range of relevant stakeholders who can support upscaling. We must seek to include sectors that are not traditionally involved in environmental conservation and social issues. There are a wide range of tools to support communication about EbA and they should be appropriate for the audience. Information about GIS based mapping tools, infographics, posters, videos, drones, apps and online platforms can all be useful, but in certain contexts digital tools can be a barrier not an enabler, as for some the format can be exclusive and challenging to engage with.

See session: [\*Ecosystem-based Adaptation \(EbA\) works! How can we effectively communicate about EbA and food security? Examples from India, South Africa, and Uganda\*](#)

**We must now move from piloting to full scale:** scaling up nature-based solutions for adaptation is more of a challenge compared with mitigation. Using existing structures, such as small grants funds, is one way forward, but we must reconcile the short-term finance with long-term aspirations. Another route is through the private sector, who could be engaged through public-private partnerships. Policy is needed as a driver of change.

See session: [\*Challenges of scaling up and financing ecosystem-based adaptation in Africa: the role of innovation\*](#)

### Ecosystem packages for food security

In Manabi, Ecuador, rich ecosystems and the Manabita cultures that inhabit them have come under pressure from social and environmental factors. Unsustainable land and water management, deforestation and changing agricultural practices, climate change and social pressures are undermining incomes and food security. The IUCN consulted communities and developed a package of ecosystem-based interventions including seed and soil conservation, agrobiodiversity support and sustainable farm management training, coupled with collaboratively designed governance arrangements such as water conservation agreements and catchment area protections. Working through local cultural and community events, they learnt that integrating local and scientific knowledge, and actively working with local cultures, was a central element of a sustainable approach. Facilitating communication between different communities was also important in finding compromise and agreement on land and water use.

### Youth inclusion

- **Youth platforms are critical:** they can bring solutions to increasing youth engagement with COP processes. Youth networks and youth-centred/led initiatives have the ability to reach from the grassroots and community to the national and international levels. They can act as a vital bridge between youth and community-based needs and policymakers.

See session: [Youth Adaptation Jam](#)

- Youth networks require funding and strong partnerships: young people must also be involved meaningfully and equitably in high-level decision-making spaces rather than tokenistic additions or being excluded from the spaces where real change and big decisions are made. Networks need funding and stronger partnerships to enable them to get the right backing and build the right skills.

See session: [Youth advocacy in achieving Agenda 2030 #ThingsLeftToDo](#)

- Across the multiple themes explored in the breakout rooms, **lack of knowledge and capacity building** emerged as a common barrier to youth participation in the processes at COP, which often require a highly technical understanding of the language and mechanisms of the UNFCCC. Not enough opportunities are available for young people to learn how to actively participate and contribute to UNFCCC processes. These could be provided if there was the will to do so.

See session: [Youth Adaptation Jam](#)

### Youth-led advocacy in Bangladesh: Beyond the Hills

In Bangladesh, areas inhabited by Indigenous Peoples are typically more vulnerable and suffer higher rates of poverty than elsewhere. Indigenous Peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and beyond find it harder to get employment, and access public services and education. A water crisis driven by climate change and illegal water extraction is undermining food security and burdening the menstrual health of women and girls in particular. Beyond the Hills is a youth-led organisation established to preserve, promote and mainstream the knowledge and culture of Indigenous Peoples. Beyond the Hills uses events and communications tools to advocate for Indigenous Peoples' rights, using art, crafts, photography and articles.

## Gender and MEL

- **Men and women are affected in different ways by climate change:** responses need to recognise how climate impacts affect men, women, elderly, youth, the educated, the uneducated, the wealthy and the poor in different ways. Interventions and policies must recognise these differences and yet be accessible to all groups to ensure they are supporting people of different types of vulnerability. Women and youth are agents of change and key players in climate responses — intersectionality should recognise their added vulnerability to climate impacts but also their agency and the solutions they bring.

See session: [Leaving no one behind; Gender equality and intersectionality in community-based adaptation](#)

- **Policies should include an implementation plan** with specific gender actions or a local-level gender action plan that considers the issues of different groups in a community. There needs to be tools in place that ensure gender action goes beyond policy, with activities implemented and monitored, with a monitoring and evaluation plan. This gender analysis should be conducted before programming and interventions with monitoring and evaluation being used to gauge change over time and learn.

See session: [Leaving no one behind; Gender equality and intersectionality in community-based adaptation](#)

**MEL is key to scaling up and learning:** multiple participants across the conference pointed out underinvestment in learning. Often it is framed as showing positive outcomes and does not highlight challenges or learning that comes from failure. Misunderstandings prevail between different parts of the institutional chain: finance, operations and programme teams don't have the same mindset. Truly implementing locally led adaptation will require institutions to embrace some discomfort in order to change their practice.

See session: [Principles for Locally Led Action 2 - How can we see them driving real impact?](#)

- **Communities have a role to play in MEL.** Allowing them to choose indicators recognises that their knowledge and vision of resilience has value. While capacity building is needed at local level, institutions must rethink what they demand from communities so that it is realistic and within their means, in order to enable them to participate in projects.

See session: [Principles for Locally Led Action 2 - How can we see them driving real impact?](#)