Factors of Change

Climate Change Practice Note

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Summary Recommendations

Climate change adaptation projects strive for a change in people's conceptions and practices. Shifting long held beliefs and preparing for unknown realities is a difficult challenge for climate change practitioners not only in Cambodia, but around the world. For change to be positive, widely felt, and sustainable, many factors need to be considered. The Cambodia Climate Change Alliance climate change project experiences show that first and foremost change must be relevant to the communities where it is to be introduced. Considering the reasons and factors that lead to acceptance and uptake, the intervention must have the attention of all those working in a climate change context. This includes policy makers, academics, development practitioners, as well as communities themselves.

Cambodia's Climate Change Context

Cambodia's development challenges are many fold including historical, political, economic, social, and environmental. Climate change is expected to compound and amplify Cambodia's development challenges, stresses, and problems in the future. Like other countries in Southeast Asia, Cambodia is expected to experience higher and more intense rainfall. The effects are likely to include periods of more severe water scarcity as well as more frequent flooding, which may result in crop failures and food shortages. Coastal communities and eco-systems are likely to be affected by rising sea levels. Higher temperatures and humidity will create conditions for increased incidences of malaria and dengue fever. Poor and marginalized communities, particularly women and children, will be the worst affected.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT CHANGE TOWARDS CLIMATE RESILIENT APPROACHES

In support of market incentives and access to markets

Access to markets is a key element for adaptation practices to take root. Be it livestock raising, aquaculture, rice, seasonal vegetable growing or post-harvest processing of products, farmers' and small scale producers' linkages to markets either as buyers or suppliers plays an important factor for change. For most CCCA projects, small local markets were essential in improving livelihoods and providing motivation for change. However, people lacked the vital information that would make their participation in these markets more meaningful and equitable. Therefore, it is important to design and implement a market information mechanism that is user friendly, timely, and reliable. The behavior of middlemen and traders can also significantly impact on peoples' lives, especially during times of crisis. Mechanisms will need to be established to counter or protect communities from unfair practices. Communities can also take advantage of opportunities to better understand how their income generation activities are supporting improvements to the livelihoods of their families. Climate change practitioners should not only invest in market analysis and value chain research, but should also help households gain valuable financial management skills.

What can climate change practitioners do?

- Ensure that climate change initiatives aimed at harnessing the benefits of markets have quality marketplace and value chain analyses attached to them. Coordinate community efforts to ensure that they do not oversupply the market and thus reduce prices (i.e. vegetable overproduction).
- Support the establishment of a comprehensive, accessible, user friendly, timely, and reliable market information system for agricultural products and produce as well as inputs.
- Support a regulated mechanism for the purchase of agricultural products such as rice to support communities during disasters (i.e. government buy-up programs for reserves).
- Introduce household level financial literacy and management skills to accompany income generating activities. Measuring and understanding expenditures and incomes can support informed decision making, especially when inputs are injected by climate change projects.
- Ensure that the climate change technologies introduced are within the reasonable reach of communities geographically, as well as within people's financial means and purchasing power

In support of local community ownership, access and management of natural resources in fisheries and forestry sectors

Promoting communal ownership, access and management of natural resources serves as a good linkage to sustainable climate change initiatives. A number of CCCA projects have prioritized the legalization and recognition of community forestry and fisheries areas as a backbone of climate change initiatives. Such an approach has not only enabled communities to have ownership and responsibility for the protection of their resources, but has also provided a good approach to collective learning and trust building which leads to synergy among community members.

Nevertheless, more needs to be done to capitalize on the potential that community ownership and access to natural resources represents for ensuring the success of climate change initiatives. A more in-depth gender analysis can help to better understand contextual implications and possible response strategies. There is also a huge potential for building community networks and efforts must be taken to capitalize on intercommunity learning.

What can climate change practitioners do?

- Integrate and support community ownership of and access to natural resources in climate change initiatives, e.g. forestry and fisheries by supporting communities' legal rights and access to such resources. Support policies and processes that enable community ownership of natural recourses in a timely and effective manner and ensure that such processes are well understood by all actors.
- Support and strengthen the institutional arrangements of community managed resources. Build capacity of community resource management committees and constantly update skills through training and networking for motivation.
- Ensure that clear gender analysis for climate change projects is undertaken and women's perspectives, roles, and responsibilities vis-à-vis community natural resource ownership and management is well understood and considered.
- Utilize community based savings led microfinance opportunities for credit and savings. These need to be sustainable and refrain from injections of initial capital by outside groups or investors, including project staff and local authorities.
- Ensure the linkage and networking of communities responsible for their own resource management to share and learn from experiences and best practices. Capture and disseminate knowledge of local communities' adaptive practices as well as indigenous knowledge.

In support of access to appropriate adaptation technologies in the agricultural sectors

Knowledge building is by far the most valued intervention that CCCA projects bring to communities. Activities centered around knowledge building not only enable communities to learn important climate related concepts for the first time, but also allow a wide segment of community members, including those with authority and status, to participate from the same limited knowledge base. Communities can play multiple roles in fostering knowledge generation, capture, and dissemination which may have a significant influence on the spread, replication, and adoption and therefore must be capitalized upon. Experiences gained through first hand reflective practices like demonstration sites are one of the most useful approaches to learning about climate change adaptation best practices. Knowledge generation, capture, and dissemination should be purposefully and systematically mainstreamed into climate change initiatives by all stakeholders, including government actors. Opportunities to exchange, share, and learn within and between communities must be mainstreamed by all stakeholders through a key knowledge generation and dissemination mechanism at all levels.

What can climate change practitioners do?

- Design and implement climate change agricultural projects that rely on experimental learning through demonstration sites. Support farmers' collective learning and knowledge generation. Foster intercommunity networking opportunities as a key principle to support learning and climate change adaptation.
- Ensure that technologies introduced in climate change agricultural projects have clear marketplace analysis attached to them and upward and downward linkages to markets clearly identified. They must be cost effective and within reach of farmers
- Provide knowledge management support to academic institutions that could make information useful not only for academic research but also in training the next generation of agricultural practitioners, especially in the climate change context.
- Since it takes time to shift practices on multiple fronts, climate change practitioners must accept that people can only move at a pace at which they are willing to. Be patient and allow time for uptake. Ensure that project cycles are conducive to multiple trials and that people are supported when experiments do not bring successful results.

In support of land ownership and use

CCCA supported projects link to and require land for implementation. Overall, CCCA project participants own their land resources and make their own decisions about their usage. Given the lack of empirical data on what ways, if

any, household land ownership plays in climate change adaptation efforts, further research into this issue may prove to be useful for practitioners. However, anecdotal evidence demonstrates that participating communities take a deeper interest in climate change initiatives if their rights and control over vital natural resources are secured. Ensuring commitment from participants at most projects sites involves land ownership as a prerequisite for participation and this may have ensured access to credits which makes new investments to climate change adoption efforts possible. More efforts need to be made in order to draw in and motivate other vulnerable segments of communities and build their skills to be adaptive to climate change.

What climate change practitioners can do?

- Build the understanding of the impact of land ownership on climate change initiatives and share learning among relevant actors.
- Know and document issues around land ownership in the area of implementation and support communities in understanding their land and ownership rights (including for common resources). Support communities to explore and experiment with alternative use of land and labor resources.
- Ensure that climate change adaptation and mitigation activities offer opportunities for those without land to also participate. Provide learning opportunities for landless or near landless so that they gain skills and improve their employment potential within their communities.

In support of immediate project benefits

Most climate change projects provide a wide range of benefits to communities that are immediately felt. Most of these immediate benefits are material contributions at no cost to the beneficiaries. However, communities often value the knowledge they receive and the ability to collectively implement this knowledge through projects within their community above any material benefits. Nevertheless, careful consideration of the injection of inputs and selection of those receiving them must be carefully considered to ensure equity and fairness. Also, climate change practitioners need to ensure that current climate variability is also addressed and provides immediate benefits in order to build momentum for proposed technologies. At the same time, careful consideration must be given to avoid overemphasis on short term benefits while neglecting the long term climate change impacts that may negate these benefits. Maladaptive practices should be avoided as much as possible. Finally, there needs to be recognition that climate change is an urgent issue and that those affected most will need the time to allow for adaptation practices to be considered and applied.

What can climate change practitioners do?

- Carefully consider how immediate benefits could be best utilized and shared by communities. Consider the level of communities' willingness to take responsibility in deciding incentives and the associated risks.
- Carefully consider selection criteria and obligations for those receiving benefits and ways to spread the benefits throughout the community, e.g. key farmers must act as focal points for PDA in return for initial intensive support they will receive in acquiring the benefits.
- Ensure clear financial analysis of benefits and risk of loss including immediate and long term. Introduce household level financial literacy and management skills to accompany income generating activities. Knowing expenditures and incomes can support informed decision making, especially when inputs are injected by climate change projects.
- Provide opportunities for non beneficiaries to reach products such as seeds in easy and cost effective way (i.e. availability in nearby markets).
- Be realistic about how long climate change project interventions may need in order to take root among participating communities. Planning for long term sustainable climate change programs rather than short term projects may be a key for success.

In support of financial incentives for sub-national and national level actors

National as well as local climate change adaptation projects need to seek the collaboration of national as well as local authorities and government actors. The motivation and commitment on behalf of these actors may determine a project's success. Most government actors in CCCA projects receive only the regulated daily service allowance to partake in project initiatives. While this is an accepted reality at sub-national levels, many national level government actors view financial disincentives as a serious challenge to the prioritization of climate change work. Steps must be taken by practitioners to find creative but perhaps non-financial opportunities to boost the motivation and commitment of these actors.

What can climate change practitioners do?

- Know and apply existing principles and policies around financial incentives for national and sub-national actors. Support incentives that are non-financial in nature, e.g. training programs and cross learning study tours.
- Support the review of appropriate financial incentive policies and practices by documenting experiences, challenges, and opportunities and sharing these with appropriate climate change stakeholders.
- Create internal policies and practices that foster accountable and transparent application of financial incentives for project participants, including national and sub-national actors.

NEXT STEPS

Put people first: The affected communities must be at the center of climate change initiatives. Be it older people, youth, or the landless, it is people's lives and livelihoods that are threatened by climate change. Supporting them in building resiliency is a priority. They are also the ones on the ground who understand and monitor the changes first hand. It is equally important to remember that women and men are affected by climate change differently and therefore climate change initiatives will need to apply a gender lens. Nevertheless, fostering collaboration between women and men in analyzing their context, environment, and corresponding responses may serve as a good model for addressing the gender paradigm of climate change.

Link, collaborate and network: Climate change cannot be tackled in isolation by different sectors, be it government, donors, civil society, the private sector, or communities themselves. It requires collaborative approaches from different government sectors as well as other practitioners, including the private sector. Supporting and fostering cross sector learning and implementation is therefore a must. Conducting in depth stakeholder analyses will be paramount in determining who is responsible for what roles and why and how linkages, collaboration, and networking could be further enhanced and appropriate strategies designed.

Allow time for adaptation to take root: While climate change is an urgent issue, those affected most will need the time to allow for adaptation practices to be considered and applied. While short term output based climate change projects may bring about good results, their long term benefits may not be realized. Short, quick return seeking projects may lead to fragmented understanding and skepticism about the benefits and can lead to an early exit from participation. Farmers may prematurely give up trying new technologies if they see low results initially. Climate change projects need to factor in that farmers need sufficient time to try, experiment, and time to fail. Most CCCA projects do not have time to allow for failure and are planned with an assumption of a win-win situation. Planning and supporting longer term programs, rather than short term projects, may provide more space for communities and practitioners to be more innovative and enable them to meet their expectations and realize ambitions.

Policy: The Royal Cambodian Government recognizes that climate change is a development issue which, if left unchecked, can have a profound impact on the future of its people. Thus, policies and practices must be conducive to climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts being delivered in the country. These include sector specific strategies as well as delivery plans for priority areas including agriculture, forestry and fisheries, health, education, water, energy, and infrastructure and they must be in line with development strategies and efforts. Given the impact of climate change on women, special consideration of their needs must be addressed and integrated in all policy making efforts. In addition, climate change is not strictly about a negative scenario and Cambodia can take advantage of the opportunities which climate change may present by setting development paths that are sustainable and conducive to green growth principles. However, policies alone will not be enough. There needs to be sustained and collaborative efforts to build a strong knowledge base as well as a capacity to respond to climate change at the national and sub-national levels.

Finance: Climate change adaptation projects can have a significant impact on the daily lives of affected communities. CCCA climate change projects are already a testament to what positive change small financial contributions can bring. As communities build their knowledge about the effects of climate change and identify possible responsive actions, they cannot be left alone to fend for themselves. Many CCCA project areas have already begun integrating climate change in their commune development and investment plans. Financing and resourcing these initiatives will be instrumental in fostering continued motivation, but more importantly in enabling communities to have a say in their own development for the future. The finances made available to communities through climate change interventions must be equitably, effectively, and accountably distributed. The international community plays an important role in ensuring adequate financing for Cambodia's climate adaptation efforts. The government of Cambodia plays an equally important role in ensuring that the financing received is channeled through a transparent and accountable mechanism.

Build scale and depth of climate change initiatives: To date, most climate change adaptation projects reach only a small segment of the population, be it farmers, educators, or policy makers. The real numbers are not known. What is well known is that climate change affects millions in Cambodia and that strategies must be formulated to bring about scale and depth of scope when investing in efforts to reach vulnerable groups. Climate change projects do represent significant potential for capitalizing on mobilizing agents of change at the community as well as leadership levels.

The Summary Recommendations are taken from CCCA commissioned publication: Climate Change Practice Note – Factors of Change, January 2014. For a full version of the document please visit www.camclimate.org.kh.

The Cambodia Climate Change Alliance (CCCA) was launched in February 2010 as a collaborative endeavor among development partners and the Royal Government of Cambodia to address climate change in the country. The initiative is led by the Ministry of Environment (MoE) and is supported by the European Union, the Governments of Denmark and Sweden, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

CAMBODIA CLIMATE CHANGE ALLIANCE

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