

Stories of Resilience: Lessons from Local Adaptation Practice



This report is the second edition of the Global Center on Adaptation's [Stories of Resilience: Lessons from Local Adaptation Practice](#) produced in partnership with CDKN. The [Global Center on Adaptation](#) (GCA) and CDKN collaborated with community leaders to showcase their brilliant work in building local adaptation solutions across many challenging contexts. This year's edition focuses on the many ways in which local communities innovate to use the materials closest to hand and their own sweat and toil to adapt: from regenerating hillsides, coasts, degraded farmlands, and urban green spaces, to recycling waste into wealth. All of these contribute to creating greater resilience for people and nature

The findings are based on more than 200 contributions from a call for stories and deeper exploration of 19 locally-led initiatives around the world.

The study outlined recommendations for global and national policymakers on how they can best support locally led adaptation:

Support holistic adaptation efforts

Funders and governments must change how adaptation finance works, instead of expecting local communities to reframe how they experience the negative impacts of climate change. They must be smarter about recognising the cascading impacts of climate change on marginalised groups in society and supporting communities to explore multiple pathways to climate-resilient development such as tackling gender-based violence and convening mutual support activities for psychosocial resilience. They must be willing to provide patient, predictable resources for LLA that directly address the social norms and structural power relations which currently perpetuate disproportionate burdens, and which widen the gender development gap.

Empower decision-makers at the local level

For truly transformational adaptation to take place, global policymakers, national and local governments, and all providers of finance must urgently support the devolution of decision-making authority and finance to the local level; and meaningful partnerships between communities and local governments to create an enabling environment that allows locally led adaptation to flourish.

Restore and protect degrading ecosystems

The resilience of poor communities is strongly linked to the resilience of ecosystems. Support community efforts to regenerate their environments and prioritise their rights and needs over those of external actors through supportive legislation, finance, institutions, and technical and capacity support. Governments and the private sector, including transnational corporations, must become more aware of the climate risk to communities from natural resource degradation and prioritise their rights to manage ecosystems over short-term profit.

Respect diversity in community approaches

Local communities often have their own processes and methodologies for group decision-making and consensus building, co-construction of knowledge, co-design of plans, and evaluative and accountability functions. These should be endorsed and supported, instead of further stretching the limited capacity of communities by expecting them to adopt and conform to donor practices. Learning by the community and by different social groups facing specific adaptation and social-political challenges must be the first priority.

Recognise and support efforts by individuals and institutions at the local level

Communities around the world are implementing adaptation through in-kind contributions, including voluntary labor. The economic value of these contributions is vastly under-recognised. Local leaders are being highly entrepreneurial in mobilising local resources for adaptation, and local institutions such as museums, schools, colleges, public health providers, churches, and other faith institutions are stepping in to fill gaps and use their social capital to promote locally led adaptation. Simple but effective ways of channelling support to such initiatives are critical.

Promote human rights as core to adaptation

Women, younger people, older people, people living with disabilities, and marginalised ethnic and Indigenous groups are confronting the unequal impacts of climate change – depending on people's different capabilities and vulnerabilities – as well as unjust responses to climate hazards because of discrimination in society. Adaptation responses may also be discriminatory. Local adaptation leaders are courageously pushing for recognition and realisation of their human rights as part of rounded locally led adaptation approaches. Confronting discrimination is essential for many people to be able to thrive, and doing so widens the leadership pool for local adaptation.

Download the report [here](#) and watch the video on [YouTube](#).



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