



CARIAA African Regional Launch

The Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia (CARIAA) is a newly established program supporting four research consortia in three different climate change hot spots in Africa and Asia. Semi-arid lands are the focus of two of the consortia: Pathways to Resilience in Semi-Arid Economies (PRISE), and Adaptation at Scale in Semi-Arid Regions (ASSAR). A third, Deltas, Vulnerability, and Climate Change: Migration as Adaptation (DECCMA), looks at deltas, while the fourth, Himalayan Adaptation, Water and Resilience (HI-AWARE), examines glacier and snow pack-dependent river basins. This report covers highlights from the program's regional launch, held in Nairobi on March 7th, 2014. Further information about the consortia including a full list of collaborating institutions is available at <http://www.idrc.ca/cariaa>.



Event participants discuss emerging challenges in the field of climate change adaptation, and how new work can respond.

CARIAA kicks off in Kenya

On March 7th, 2014, the CARIAA program was launched to the public in Nairobi, Kenya. Jean Lebel, president of IDRC, opened the launch, which was attended by consortia members, stakeholders, media, and government representatives from Kenya. Alice Kaudia, Environment Secretary, and Engineer Fidelis Kyengo from the Kenyan Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources endorsed the program as a timely and important initiative, and noted that its focus on hotspot regions will be a positive contribution to research and policy formulation. Noting that CARIAA strives to interface research, policy and practice, government representatives commended CARIAA's goal to understand what works in practice. They shared their hope that the research would be complemented by effective communication strategies to share findings, including platforms for knowledge sharing.

Research on semi-arid lands is important to Kenya, which is already coping with the impacts of climate change: it is increasingly affecting food security, trade, and migration. In a country that relies heavily on its natural resource base, frequent droughts and crop failures negatively impact socioeconomic development and prosperity, and threaten to undo progress made on the Millennium Development Goals.



Opening a dialogue with stakeholders

The launch event enabled 60 stakeholders from a wide array of organizations to learn about CARIAA, begin dialogues with consortia members on key topics relevant to the research, and discuss avenues for collaborating in the future. Dr. Alex Awiti, Director of the East Africa Institute at Aga Khan University, and Dr. Virinder Sharma of DFID Kenya were invited to comment on presentations from CARIAA's four consortia on their planned research activities. The two discussants applauded the consortia on the breadth of their ambitions in terms of the geographic scale and complexity of issues being addressed. The discussants also challenged the consortia's thinking, setting the stage for a constructive dialogue between stakeholders and consortia that CARIAA aims to promote throughout the duration of the program. Dr. Sharma, for instance, set out four key challenges for consortia: 1) clarifying key terminology, such as *vulnerability*, in language that is understood across the partnership and its stakeholders; 2) effectively linking research, practice and policy; 3) integrating collective reflection and learning processes into consortium activities, and 4) working together as multidisciplinary consortia.

The consortia presentations are available online:

- [Adaptation at Scale in Semi-Arid Regions](#)
- [Deltas, Vulnerability, and Climate Change: Migration and Adaptation](#)
- [Himalayan Adaptation, Water and Resilience](#)
- [Pathways to Resilience in Semi-Arid Economies](#)

Paving the way forward

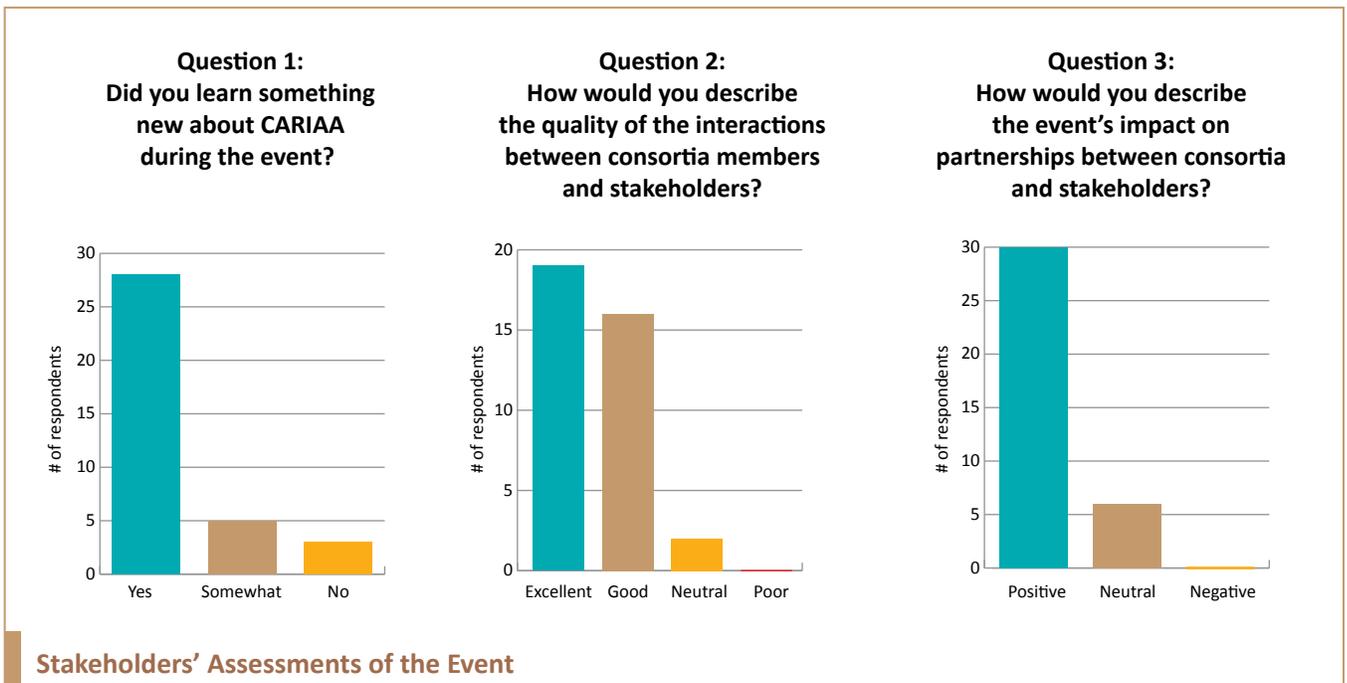
Launch event participants discussed emerging challenges in the field of climate change adaptation, actions that are currently having an impact in these areas, and ways in which new work can respond. Several crosscutting themes were identified in these discussions. While the themes themselves may be familiar, stakeholders and consortia members alike brought to the table interesting ideas for solutions and relevant examples of successful initiatives that might provide useful points of departure for CARIAA.

1. Getting research into action

What's at stake? Participants discussed linking research to policy and the economics of climate change, noting that there is limited communication between research communities and governments.

What needs to be done? Spaces for dialogue must be created between research and policy in order to build trust.

Ways forward: The consortia should ensure they have identified effective entry points for research into policy. Research that is poised to take advantage of windows of opportunity that spur government action—like mobilizing responses to extreme weather—may be adopted more quickly. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), for instance, is acting on the prolonged droughts in East Africa to bring their analysis of seasonal forecasts to influence government policy and action. Recent



IDRC experience suggests that identifying the “movers and shakers” of change, and setting up champions at different political scales can also facilitate the use of research in policy.

2. Learning across different scales

What’s at stake? Climate change is a complex problem involving multiple types of actors and geopolitical scales. Issues like pastoralism or migration, for example, require a broader scope to address interrelated impacts and potential adaptations across multiple locations and scales. Participants discussing taking adaptation to scale and private sector engagement, noted that research results need to become better at linking across different stakeholder groups and scales in order to contribute to a sustainable solution.

What needs to be done? Researchers and policymakers need to identify means to transfer knowledge across contexts (scaling out) and examine how to link local, regional, national, and transnational levels (scaling up).

Ways forward: There are already examples of institutional innovations that facilitate scaling up and out, particularly within and between governments. Participants cited ICIMOD as one example of how intergovernmental organizations can work at the regional level to enable long-term cooperation among researchers and engagement with stakeholders across scales.

Participatory research and learning approaches such as CARE’s Adaptation and Learning Program (ALP) and the Climate Change Adaptation in Africa (CCAA) program were also cited as community-based initiatives that draw out practical learning from the local context, practitioners and governments at multiple scales of inquiry. These plans can be brought to the government level with the aim of scaling up.

3. Stakeholder engagement

What’s at stake? Participants discussing private sector engagement agreed that change needs to be demanded. Where development actors view communities as passive receivers, solutions are still top-down. Furthermore, adaptation is already happening on the ground; researchers and policymakers that ignore this risk losing out on learning that has already taken place and creating policies that do more damage than good.

What needs to be done? Researchers and policymakers need to recognize the value of local and



Dr. Alice Kaudia, Kenya’s Environment Secretary, addresses an audience of CARIAA stakeholders.

indigenous knowledge, and work with communities to build this knowledge into their modeling and policies. Participation and feedback should be made an integral part of research. A continuous dialogue between those that produce research and those that could use it is needed. This requires an understanding of the different vocabularies needed to engage with different actors.

Ways forward: Social learning is one way for consortia to build community capacity and encourage community ownership of solutions. KENWEB (the Kenya Wetlands Biodiversity Research Team) and IUCN’s work in Lower Rufiji, Tanzania is an example of this. Embedded in local government, they started to build capacity at this level and to bring technical people together in a network to develop research. Their focus was on the co-construction of knowledge, made possible by training local people to champion the cause, collect data, and communicate across sectors to build understanding.

4. Understanding climate change

What’s at stake? Participants felt that many aspects of climate change are still not well understood. Additionally, those discussing climate science, communication, and agriculture in the context of climate change noted that making the information we do have accessible for different types of stakeholders is challenging.



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What needs to be done? Research is needed in gap areas: the impact of extreme weather events and sedimentation in deltas are just two examples of many. Simplifying the data produced by this research—as well as improving access to it—is one side of expanding the reach and uptake of research, while promoting understanding among different stakeholder groups is the other.

Ways forward: Given the long-term funding from DFID and IDRC, CARIAA consortia can both broaden their scope and target their research to fill gaps. Translating research “data” into “information” using stakeholder-specific vocabulary and local languages, as well as ensuring the quality of platforms and portals for information access, will help to improve reach and uptake of findings. The CORDEX Africa (the Coordinated Regional Climate Downscaling Experiment in Africa) initiative, for instance, is working on downscaling climate information to produce outputs that are regionally specific and useful. Shamba Shape-Up, a reality TV show that provides practical advice on agricultural adaptations to climate change, is another example of a growing number of initiatives engaging directly with the public to spread information.

Collaborating with the media to build their capacity to report on climate change and to understand their influence can help to move public understanding in the right direction. BBC Media Action is taking steps in this direction, working to understand people’s perceptions and interpretations of climate change in Asia (Climate Asia) and Africa (Africa Talks Climate).

5. Migration and vulnerability:

What’s at stake? Participants discussing coastal adaptation, engaging with the most vulnerable and migration in the context of climate change agreed that the interrelationship between migration, chronic poverty, vulnerability and climate change adaptation is not well understood by researchers and policymakers alike.

What needs to be done? Disaggregating vulnerability will be a key part of ensuring that consortia’s research benefits those most in need. This often requires unpacking layers of contributing factors, like poverty and gender. Similar research is needed into the drivers and impacts of migration; here key factors include the private sector, land, governance, and remittances. Consortia can also work with governments to think about whether migration would be a useful addition to national adaptation plans, to harmonize policies across countries, and to build useful legal definitions and policies on environmental migrants.

Ways forward: Several organizations have built tools to assess vulnerability. The Gender and Water Alliance together with SaciWATERS has come up with a gender and equity gauge to help identify the most vulnerable people in a community. Other organizations are helping governments to understand changing migration patterns. The French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), for instance, carried out studies on trans-boundary pastoralist migration in Benin that led to more participatory governance and consultation processes, in turn resulting in a reformulation of the country’s migration policy. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is also providing training to immigration departments, for instance in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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The African Regional Launch is the first of a series of events through which CARIAA began stakeholder dialogues at the outset of the program. Information on other events are available on the CARIAA website. CARIAA is funded by Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID). The program aims to build the resilience of vulnerable populations and their livelihoods in three climate change hot spots in Africa and Asia.