



Save the Children



# CHILD-CENTRED CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Case studies from the Philippines and Vietnam

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## About Plan

Plan is one of the oldest and largest children's development organisations in the world, working with communities in more than 50 developing countries. By actively involving children, and working at a grassroots level with no religious or political affiliations, Plan unites and inspires people around the globe to transform the world for children.

## About Save the Children

Save the Children is the world's leading independent children's rights organisation, with members in 30 countries and operational programs in more than 120 countries. We fight for children's rights and deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

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For readers – we actively encourage your feedback so your comments may be fed into the future design and implementation of our climate change adaptation projects. Please contact us: [corinne.schoch@savethechildren.org.au](mailto:corinne.schoch@savethechildren.org.au) and [pia.treichel@plan.org.au](mailto:pia.treichel@plan.org.au).

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Students trying out Self-Learning Kits in the Philippines. Photo: Plan International

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Farmers show off their rice yields in Ba To, Vietnam. Photo: Plan International

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**This report outlines the practical lessons learned by Plan International and Save the Children about child-centred community-based adaptation (CC-CBA) to climate change. It provides a snapshot of our work across the Philippines and Vietnam and addresses five key themes: Participatory approaches: ensuring children's voices are heard in community-based adaptation (CBA); building climate resilience; mainstreaming CBA into policy planning and development; children as agents of change; and the role of communication to mobilise action and replication. Through a series of case studies, the report details some of the specific examples of how project participants have engaged with CC-CBA activities and consolidates best-practice lessons and recommendations for practitioners and donors.**

Communities across the globe are already experiencing the effects of extreme weather events and unpredictable variations in seasonal weather, with poor communities, women, children and marginalised groups disproportionately affected by the impacts. The perspectives of children within the field of climate change adaptation have remained largely sidelined and yet, as this report illustrates, children's needs, voices and capacities can and should be integrated across adaptation efforts as this leads to the establishment of longer-term and more robust community and political frameworks. Plan International and Save the Children understand the importance of community-based adaptation (CBA) that is underpinned by a participatory and rights-based approach. With funding from the Australian Aid program, our organisations sought to build the resilience and adaptive capacity of children, communities and their governments in the Philippines and Vietnam to manage the impacts of climate change.

## Participatory approaches: ensuring children's voices are heard in CBA

Children are affected by both current and future climate change impacts, yet their voices are rarely heard or considered in climate change adaptation activities. CC-CBA arises from a child-rights approach. It seeks to ensure the concerns and priorities of children and youth are heard in decision-making around climate change adaptation. It is an approach that works with children and young people to facilitate their understanding of climate change, drawing on their voices and empowering them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to catalyse action at home, at school and in the community.

**Key lesson:** To break down barriers to children's engagement, parents, teachers and community members should be systematically involved and encouraged to support children's active participation in a range of child-centred and child-led activities. Dedicated capacity and confidence building activities for children will empower them to become active citizens in their schools and communities, and support them to demand governments take proactive steps to address the current and future challenges that climate change poses to all.

## Building climate resilience

Building climate resilience can take many forms. One primary component of resilience simply relates to the quality and timeliness of information and knowledge that children, communities and government institutions have access to. However, this acquisition of knowledge is not sufficient on its own. Communities must also be given skills through which they can apply this knowledge. In addition, institutional frameworks must be supported so that climate resilience building activities can be sustained. Mechanisms, such as insurance, social funds and the diversification of livelihood options, are just some of the activities that were implemented across the Philippines and Vietnam. Communities were provided with technical trainings (provision of knowledge) and support (ongoing technical support from NGOs and government institutions) to carry out locally relevant climate change adaptation activities.

**Key lesson:** Collaborating with local technical departments to support the CBA livelihood models enhances both cost efficiency and sustainability of these models. The project worked closely with the district-level Agriculture Extension Offices and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Vietnam to provide technical training courses for farmers. This increased the role and responsibility of local agencies and departments to provide better services for farmers. Project staff and local technical officials exchanged knowledge and experiences on CBA models, benefitting both the project beneficiaries (direct and indirect) but also government agencies. Furthermore, the project benefitted from inputs by relevant technical agencies, such as the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration and the Climate Change Commission, to better inform and enhance project outcomes.

## Mainstreaming CBA into policy planning and development

The primary tool used in this project was Community Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (CVCAs). Through the process of CVCAs, communities, government officials, children, teachers and project staff worked together to analyse local hazards and understand communities' vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities to manage the uncertainties of climate change. Based on the outcomes of the CVCAs, the projects then provided opportunities for children, schools, community-members and local government units to apply for small grants to help them implement some of the prioritised climate change adaptation actions. This enabled children to design, implement, apply for funding and monitor their own interventions. The success of these actions has been used to advocate for local government units in the Philippines and Vietnam to integrate CC-CBA into their respective Annual Investment Plans and Socio-Economic Development Plans. There are already multiple examples of this taking place across the project provinces.

**Key lesson:** The CVCA framework provides a strong entry point for children's participation in climate change adaptation project design, implementation and monitoring across all CBA projects. If CVCA analysis and planning is conducted with the support and participation of a wider range of community and government stakeholders, there is every chance that successful initiatives can and will be incorporated into future local development planning.

## Children as agents of change

Throughout our projects, we've seen children design, implement and monitor adaptation actions appropriate for their age and context. These range from planting vegetable gardens at school – where the profits from selling harvests are channelled back to the children's climate clubs to fund further actions – to mangrove or tree planting to protect waterfront structures from floods and storms. Children are working with adults and their municipal governments on improved waste disposal systems, and they are conducting education and community outreach. Many of the climate-related actions children have participated in are also building their skills more generally. For example, the Bulilit Brodcasters (child broadcasters) in the Philippines have not only increased the knowledge and understanding of climate change concepts within their audience but also built skills in radio presentation and interviewing.

**Key lesson:** To sustain the benefits of activities beyond the life of the project and into the future, CBA projects should not limit engagement to adults and government officials but holistically engage children and young people throughout the entire project cycle. Harnessing the energies and enthusiasms of children for positive change can have an impact on decision-makers at all levels of communities and governments.

## The role of communication to mobilise action and replication

Communication plays an important role in CBA, not only as a means to share information and engage and mobilise communities in behaviour change, but as a powerful tool in advocating for policy change. Effective communication among children, communities or local government officials can increase the understanding and ability of these stakeholders to plan for current and future climate change impacts. Communicating CBA provides an opportunity to shift the focus from the projected impacts of climate change to practical action that can be taken now. Communicating to decision-makers from the bottom-up or out to communities can take many forms. On one hand, we have children as the holders of knowledge who are sharing climate change information with other children in their communities – their peers. While on the other hand, children are driving information flows upwards towards local and national government bodies. In both cases building the adaptive capacity of boys, girls, youth, parents or local government officials can lead to a range of effective communications that are carried out at multiple scales and across multiple forums.

**Key lesson:** Providing avenues for children and national government bodies to engage and discuss practical solutions to climate change adaptation may seem time consuming and challenging but in practice can play a fundamental role to the success of CBA project outcomes. Engaging with relevant government counterparts at all levels, and explicitly including key moments and mechanisms for this engagement in project design and implementation, will maximise opportunities for learning and replicating project successes, and should always be integrated across the project design.

Based on these case studies, Plan International and Save the Children have put together key recommendations for those looking to design, implement and monitor effective CBA projects.

## Key recommendations

- The inclusion of boys and girls in community-based adaptation (CBA) initiatives will bring benefits. Whether these initiatives are child-centred (i.e. the impacts of climate change and proposed adaptations on children's lives are explicitly considered) or child-led (i.e. children actively determine their own solutions), there are benefits for the long-term sustainability of climate change adaptation efforts if tomorrow's leaders are included today.
- Child-centred community-based adaptation (CC-CBA) projects should be holistic in their integration of child-centred approaches and need to be based on a considered theory of change from the outset of the project. Ad-hoc and afterthought activities with children are not as effective as those that integrate children's knowledge and understanding into the actions of a community.
- The design of climate change and CBA programs should focus on providing children and communities with the appropriate skills that allow them to respond to current and future changes to their environment as opposed to strong technical understandings of complex climatic systems.
- Appropriate solutions for a given child, family or community should be informed by robust scientific understanding but locally driven and based on the specificity of risks and their economic, social, cultural, geographic, political and historical context. Prescribed or predetermined solutions are not likely to be owned by the community, nor are they centred in their experiences, which means they are likely to fail in the long term. As such, solutions need to be generated through a set of participatory processes and assessments in which beneficiaries play an active role.
- Where possible, CBA programming should aim to have a cross-sectoral programming approach. A CBA approach can remain the entry point but as climate change cuts across numerous sectors, ensuring the sustainability of project activities and outcomes are embedded in wider social, economic and political processes necessitates this cross-sectoral integration.
- The importance of partnerships cannot be overstated. Under a CC-CBA project, potential partners can be varied, and may include departments of education, social welfare, vocational training and the private sector, as well as more traditional partners such as departments of environment and disaster management. Time should be invested in analysing possible partners for success and building and maintaining those partnerships.
- Children and community members should be supported to communicate to relevant technical and scientific bodies what support and information they require to better respond and adapt to climate change in their local context.
- The mainstreaming of CBA into policy and processes at the local, district and national levels is critical for both sustaining gains made as well as extending the reach of CBA projects. Linking community-based interventions with higher political processes should play a fundamental part in all CBA projects.
- Fragmented policy frameworks, a convoluted climate finance system and a weak understanding of climate change adaptation are hindering the ability of local government actions on climate change. Capacity building of local government staff and the creation of a dedicated cross-party climate change committee will enable better oversight of climate change activities and enhance their ability to hold national government officials and policy-makers to account.
- Partnerships are vital within government as well as within a specific project. Under a CC-CBA project, cross-departmental partnerships should be formed to enhance transparency and clarity of actions. Departments of education, social welfare, health, planning, vocational training, finance, disaster management and environment should each have a climate change focal point to ensure that government response to climate change is effective and sustained.
- Local, district and national governments should support relevant technical and scientific bodies to respond to the needs raised by children and community members in their desire to respond and adapt to climate change.



### Definitions

#### **Barangay:**

A small village in the Philippines; the smallest administrative division in the Philippines.

#### **Commune:**

A small village in Vietnam; the smallest administrative division in Vietnam.

Santino (right) tends to a tree he planted with his friend as part of a tree-planting activity in the Philippines. Photo: Save the Children

# INTRODUCTION

Climate change is one of the principal development challenges of the twenty-first century. The effects of climate change will be felt worldwide, ensuring no-one will be immune to its influence. Communities across the globe are already experiencing the impacts of extreme weather events, variations in temperature and rainfall patterns. Poor communities, women, children and marginalised groups are disproportionately affected. Lack of resources, social inequities, power imbalances and limited opportunities are often the primary contributors to the particular vulnerabilities that define these groups.<sup>1</sup>

The field of climate change adaptation has largely emerged as a result of the global inadequacy to limit the emissions of greenhouse gases. It is a response that aims to address the current and future impacts of climate change. From this field, the practice of community-based adaptation (CBA) has slowly gained traction, as it recognises the unique challenges placed on those who are most vulnerable. Rather than solely applying processes that are top-down in nature, CBA aptly applies a lens that draws out the unique experiences and risks faced by the most vulnerable, and ensures their knowledge is woven within the very fabric of the proposed solutions.

Plan International and Save the Children understand the importance of CBA that is underpinned by a participatory and rights-based approach. To better support the communities we work with, a joint Child-Centred Climate Resilience program began in 2012 with funding from Australian Aid, now DFAT. The program builds the adaptive capacity of children and their communities in the Philippines and Vietnam to manage the impacts of climate change.

The Child-Centred Climate Resilience project has the following objectives:

## In the Philippines

- Increasing the resilience of children, youth and their communities to the impacts of climate change across 40 barangays.
- Strengthening the evidence-base within the Philippines for child-centred community-based adaptation (CC-CBA) that informs policy and practice.

## In Vietnam

- Increasing the ability of children and their communities to directly plan for and manage the negative impacts of climate variability and change.
- Improving the ability of government and civil society to meet the adaptation needs of children and their communities, in line with national objectives.



## Defining community-based adaptation (CBA)

CBA places communities at the heart of decision-making and planning processes. It ensures their existing knowledge is interlinked with innovative strategies that address current vulnerabilities and risks, and that build the climate resilience<sup>2</sup> of those facing the impacts of climate change.

CBA is still a relatively new field of practice and has typically been championed by development practitioners. However, in recent years the dialogue has widened and interest among policy makers, researchers and governments has grown. The stories that have come from the field are no longer simply anecdotal in nature but a robust evidence base has begun to emerge,<sup>3</sup> particularly with regards to the importance and impact of mainstreaming CBA into development and policy.

It is an approach that has been shown to open up communication pathways between communities, local stakeholders and local and national governments. It embeds new knowledge into existing community structures and processes, provides a bridge between innovative technical expertise and existing community practices, and ultimately enhances communities' awareness and capacities to better understand and respond to the challenges posed by their new environment.

## The importance of mainstreaming child-centred approaches into CBA

Historically, the voices of children have largely been omitted from discussions that relate to community planning and activities.<sup>4</sup> It has been widely assumed the voices of adults have comprehensively addressed the needs of the community as a whole<sup>5</sup> thus sidelining the views of children who are often portrayed as passive victims of disaster events and climate change impacts.<sup>6</sup>

The research on child agency and voice within the context of CBA remains in its infancy. Over recent years, child-centred organisations such as Plan International, Save the Children, UNICEF and World Vision have sought to enhance the robustness of knowledge in this space. Yet, while the stories from community-level programs clearly demonstrate the unique opportunities presented by including the perceptions of boys and girls on disasters and climate change impacts, the empirical evidence remains insufficient.

Including the voices of children is not just about including their views on certain topics. It is about creating a favourable environment that actively promotes their participation throughout the process, as well as engaging adults.

While the inclusion of children's voices into program design and implementation remains almost entirely an activity carried out by child-centred organisations<sup>7</sup> it is important to note that all programming that works at the community level to address climate change impacts should holistically incorporate the views of children. Not making these inclusions places organisations at risk of designing programs that do not accurately reflect the lived realities of children.

Climate change is an issue of intergenerational justice. Children are least responsible for climate change and yet will

bear the brunt of future impacts. Today's children form one of the most vulnerable groups exposed to the impacts of climate variability but they are also the adults of the future. As such, adaptive capacity should be embedded early to dramatically improve the sustainability of CBA programs.

## The purpose of this report

This publication was designed with a clear purpose in mind: to increase awareness within the sector of what it means to take a child-centred approach to CBA, and the benefits of doing so.

Plan International and Save the Children are by no means the only organisations working on CBA, nor are we the only agencies who've recognised the value of focusing on children and climate change. Yet across the sector there has been a distinct lack of documented experiences on how to approach child-centred CBA (CC-CBA), or that comprehensively provide methodologies, approaches and examples that could be replicated elsewhere.

In this publication, we've tried to capture the experiences of children and young people, teachers, government officials and practitioners to demonstrate what our two organisations have achieved together in this field across two countries – the Philippines and Vietnam. While there are some similarities in context because of their close geographical location, there are also many differences in culture and political context, and in the specific threats posed by climate change. It is hoped the case studies provided – which come from ethnic minorities in the central mountains of Vietnam and typhoon-affected communities in the Philippines – can serve as a resource for CBA practitioners wherever they are working in the world.



<sup>1</sup>Holmes, R and Jones, N (2010) Rethinking social protection using a gender lens: Synthesis Paper. ODI. Accessed April 2015: <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/6273.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>In recent years the concept of resilience has emerged as a popular term within civil society, donor agencies, multi-lateral organisations and government institutions. While the term is appealing and widely applied, its exact definition remains heavily contested. For the purposes of this publication we have borrowed from UNISDR and define resilience as "the ability of individuals (including children), households and countries to resist, to adapt and to manage change by maintaining or transforming living standards in the face of shocks or stresses, without compromising their long-term prospects".

<sup>3</sup>Reid, H and Huq, S (2014) Mainstreaming community-based adaptation into national and local planning. *Climate and Development*, 6:4, 291-292, DOI: 10.1080/17565529.2014.937201

<sup>4</sup>Mitchell, P and Borchard, C (2014) Mainstreaming children's vulnerabilities and capacities into community-based adaptation to enhance impact. *Climate and Development*, 6:4, 372-381, DOI: 10.1080/17565529.2014.934775

<sup>5</sup>Accessed 30 January 2015: <https://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/IF13.3.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Mitchell, P and Borchard, C (2014) Mainstreaming children's vulnerabilities and capacities into community-based adaptation to enhance impact. *Climate and Development*, 6:4, 372-381, DOI: 10.1080/17565529.2014.934775

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

# CHAPTER I

## PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES: ENSURING CHILDREN'S VOICES ARE HEARD IN CBA

Participation is about having the opportunity to express a view, influence decision-making and effect change. Children's participation is the informed and willing involvement of all children, including the most marginalised and those of different ages and abilities, in any matter concerning them directly or indirectly.<sup>9</sup> Children's participation is a key principle of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and is central to the rights-based approach embraced by Plan International and Save the Children.

Children are affected by both current and future climate change impacts, yet their voices are rarely heard or considered in climate change adaptation activities.<sup>10</sup> Child-centred community-based adaptation (CC-CBA) arises from a child-rights approach. It seeks to ensure the concerns and priorities of children and youth are heard in decision-making around climate change. It is an approach that works with children and young people to facilitate their understanding of climate change, drawing on their voices and empowering them with the knowledge, skills and confidence to catalyse action at home, at school and in the community, through to adulthood.

The degree to which children are engaged is often dependent on a number of factors. In some countries children's participation involves challenging social and culturally constructed norms and is sensitive to traditional power dynamics. When decision-makers create policies and programs for climate change adaptation, children's concerns are rarely part of the discussion, even though children will benefit most from increased knowledge, resources and funding.<sup>11</sup>

However, children regularly bring new ideas or creative solutions. They can engage communities and they could potentially break down the barriers on complex and tricky issues. They often have a better understanding of the science of climate change processes than adults in the community due to their school lessons, and they can draw out the implications for local livelihoods.<sup>12</sup> Their voices can provide a fresh and engaging vehicle through which to advocate to policy makers and call them to account. The CC-CBA approaches can make use of any number of creative participatory tools to

help children identify and prioritise issues that most affect them, including storytelling, interactive drama, dance or more focused discussions and plenary sessions.

As illustrated in the following case studies, children developed stories, games, songs, theatre and multimedia that other children can relate to, providing a new forum for peer-to-peer learning and for educating the wider community. In all instances, participatory approaches were used as a means of engagement and a space was provided for creative expression. This in turn provided the basis for further exploration, learning, discussion and action. Children did not just gain experience and knowledge from the songs and storybooks but from the process itself.

### Key lessons

- Robust monitoring tools should be developed that are age-appropriate to better capture knowledge acquisition and knowledge application for boys and girls.
- To break down barriers to children's engagement, parents, teachers and community members should be systematically involved and encouraged to support children's active participation in a range of child-centred and child-led activities. Dedicated capacity and confidence building activities for children will empower them to become active citizens in their schools and communities, and support them to demand governments take proactive steps to address the current and future challenges that climate change poses to all.

<sup>9</sup>Save the Children (2013) Children Participation Humanitarian Guidelines

<sup>10</sup>Plush, T (2009) 'Amplifying children's voices in climate change: A participatory video', Participatory Learning and Action. The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

<sup>11</sup>Reid, H, Mozaharul, A, Berger, R, Cannon, T, Huq, S and Milligan, A (2006) 'Community-Based Adaptation to climate change: An overview'. Participatory Learning and Action. The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

<sup>12</sup>ibid.

## Case study Vietnam

### A storybook competition in Quang Nam

Vietnam's impressive economic transformation over the last 30 years is considered one of the great success stories in the developing world. Yet, while Vietnam has slowly begun to transition from agriculture towards manufacturing and services, 80 percent of its population is still entirely reliant on farming – a sector that remains highly vulnerable to external market volatility and environmental shocks. Despite this reliance, communities are largely uninformed about climate change and its impacts.

Thuy lives in Quang Nam with her parents, two siblings – one of whom has a disability – and her two aunts. She is in the sixth grade and attends the local primary school. Until recently she and her family had never heard of the term climate change and how its impacts might affect their community.

Save the Children, the Quang Nam Department of Education and Training and the Red Cross have been working in partnership in Quang Nam, and across the Thang Binh and Duy Xuyen districts, to build the capacity of vulnerable children and their communities to better understand, plan for and manage the impacts of climate change. As part of this CBA project, Thuy and her classmates took part in a range of experiential activities both inside and outside the classroom. These activities helped them to understand climate change and integrate these concepts into daily life.

In 2014, children aged 9–15 at schools involved in the project were invited to participate in a storybook



competition. The students were encouraged to tell the story of how climate change was affecting their community, and potential solutions that could help their community better adapt. The students were asked to consider the different needs of girls and boys as well as students of different ages and those with a disability. The result was a collection of imaginative and insightful stories about climate change that were appropriate for the whole community, many of which drew on well-known fairy tales and much-loved storybooks. Their stories became a conduit for message dissemination on climate change and a way of calling the community to action.

A panel of judges selected stories that best met the criteria; this included demonstrating sufficient understanding of climate change impacts and relevant adaptation. The winners of the competition had their stories published and placed in their school libraries, creating new, locally relevant and accessible resources written by children for children.

Thuy was one of the children selected to have her story published.

"I think the storybook will be useful for readers to teach people how to respond to flooding. The book is written in a simple way with big drawings and few words so it will attract small children," said Thuy of her book.

"I brought the storybook home to show my parents and siblings, the pictures were especially useful in communicating to my disabled brother who does not attend school. My mum said it is a very nice story with beautiful drawings."

Community members and teachers saw an increase in the level of confidence in children who participated in the storybook competition. It was an interactive and dynamic process that allowed them to explore ways of communicating climate change knowledge for their own peers as well as the wider community. The participatory approaches were also highly valued by the teachers as they witnessed a surge in student engagement and enthusiasm.

The children's stories not only translated often complex terms into simple pictorial diagrams but their stories were contextually and locally relevant. Their solutions reflected local experiences and knowledge. These types of participatory and community-based activities raise the profile of children's voices within their schools and across the community. In a future meeting with local authorities these stories will also be shared, further raising the importance of this type of approach. It demonstrates that "the use of genuine participatory processes is important if CBA is to fit with community priorities and build on existing practices or those used in the past".<sup>13</sup>

"I feel very happy and proud of myself for doing something for others through writing this storybook on climate change," said Thuy. "My friends and I made the book in a group and it was so fun and exciting to do something together with classmates."

<sup>13</sup>Reid, H, Huq, S and Murray, L (2010) Community champions: Adapting to climate challenges. Accessed April 2015: <http://pubs.iied.org/pdfs/10028IIE.pdf>

### Making waves: Children's Public Service Announcements on climate change

With the impact of climate change felt increasingly in the Philippines, youth participating in the CBA project came up with creative ways of communicating climate change messages to their fellow Filipinos. In one village, young people produced Public Service Announcements (PSAs) that made waves in their communities.

Many people in Southern Leyte rely on farming and fishing for their livelihoods. Because of the dependence on these trades, the population is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change – particularly storm surges, flooding, landslides and typhoons.

At 17-years-old, Maylen is a youth leader from a small village in Southern Leyte. Together with her fellow youth leaders, she participated in a multi-day training with Plan International focused on climate change awareness and communication. The group comprised high school students aged 14–16 from across four barangays. As part of the training, students were supported to develop PSAs about climate change. They were guided by facilitators and were given the liberty to create stories regarding any climate change topic.

In this project, PSA describes the use of video and audio by children and young people to communicate to their peers and the wider community what they have learned about climate change. Designing PSAs helps to build the confidence of the participants. It also builds their understanding about communication more generally and gives them methods to create change around issues that are important to them, helping to foster resilience beyond the project. These important skills can be used in the future to influence community and regional leaders, as well as their own immediate friends and family.

For her PSA, Maylen worked together with a small group to produce a short video. The video begins with two children playing in the heat of the sun. They decide to go home to cool off. One child wants to use the air conditioning, but his friend tells him it affects the environment. The last frames of the PSA show the two boys fanning themselves under the cool shade of a tree to avoid using electricity.<sup>14</sup>

The power of PSAs lies not only in the content, but how that content is communicated. They are usually less than 30 seconds long, and their short format and humorous depictions by children and young people from within the community make them very appealing to viewers.

“Mas dali makuha ang atensiyon sa mga taoo pinaagi sa PSA kontra sa tag-ar nga lektsur ng istorya. (It is easier to catch the audience's attention compared to lectures where there is a possibility people are not listening to you because of long speeches),” said Maylen. “Pag PSA, nae-enjoy nila na napapanood nila at naririnig nila. (If it's

a PSA, they enjoy it while watching and listening to it).” Maylen's PSA was broadcast at her school. “Nakita ang reaksiyon ng mga kaklase na natututuwa dahil nakita kami, at learnings nila ay tag-init pwede na gumamit ng ibang materials para mawala ang init sa katawan. (We saw the reactions of our classmates when they saw the [PSA] ... they learned that during dry season we can use other methods to cool off),” she said.

The project supported the development of 11 PSAs by youth groups. The development of the PSAs is just one activity within the suite of actions on climate change under the project. Linking the education and experiences of children with wider community engagement on climate change is an important part of ensuring the effectiveness of the PSAs. Similarly, placing PSA developments within ongoing education and awareness-raising activities for students helped to maximise the value of PSAs as a learning opportunity.

Maylen felt she learned a lot from the making of PSAs. “Na-observe na merong climate change. (We observe that climate change is happening),” she explained.

“Dapat matutunan paano ma-adapt ang climate change. Siguro hindi natin ito masusugpo, pero meron tayo magagawa para mabawasan ang climate change. (So we need to learn how to adapt to climate change. Even if we cannot eliminate it completely, we should do what we can to reduce climate change).”



Children in Southern Leyte filming their PSAs. Photo: Plan International

<sup>14</sup>To watch this video, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opWBWnny3SQ&feature=youtu.be>

### Learning by helping others: A young facilitator's story

Ten-year-old Tam lives with her parents and sister in Thai Nguyen province. The main source of income for the family is rice production. Their small village is often affected by landslides and floods, and in the rainy season it can be difficult for the students to get to school as the roads mostly become inaccessible.

Tam and her sister both attend primary school. Her school is one of the most disadvantaged schools in the district – 80 percent of the students are from ethnic minorities and 70 percent are from poor households. Every year, local children and their families face longer dry periods as well as more frequent cold spells. In some locations, flooding is also exacerbated by climate change. This limits the ability of many families to improve their lives, keeping them vulnerable to hunger and poverty.

In 2014, Tam and other students at her school took part in a training course on climate change communication with Plan International. The program was designed to form a group of young facilitators to promote small group communication activities with other students in primary and lower secondary schools across the district. Children who were selected to be core facilitators, including Tam, were trained as part of the wider education and awareness-raising activities under the CBA project. These young facilitators then turned their attention to building the knowledge of other children.

“I've learnt a great deal about climate change. I used to know little about climate change, the difference between climate and weather, greenhouse effect and the likes,” said Tam.

“However, since I attended the training, I got to understand more and more about climate change, how it affects our lives and what we should do. I even helped other friends at school to learn more about it through our small group communication activities. Every month, my friends and I organised small groups and communicated about climate change using games and flipcharts.”

“The games like *Who am I* and *Melting Ice* are very fun too. My classmates like them a lot. The more I help my friends, the better I understand about climate change. We found the knowledge useful in other subjects as well.”

Tam initiated these activities with 10 other students in her school, and her knowledge on climate change was transferred to more than 200 students in the same school through a series of communication events. More than 4,000 students in 20 targeted schools in Thai Nguyen province benefited from similar activities.

In Tam's commune, there are two schools that are supported by the project, each with 10 core facilitators like Tam. According to local teachers and parents, this child-led facilitation on climate change communication has shown them good evidence of children's leadership

and ability to promote knowledge and awareness. It shows that it's not only experts who teach us.

Tam often shares her knowledge and stories with her parents and sister too. Her parents are very proud of her and encouraged her to participate more in similar activities when they realised the positive changes in Tam's confidence and study.

“Tam was shy. She didn't speak in public very often. She has changed a lot since she joined these activities at school. She even won a prize at the district event. We are so happy to see our children grow like that,” said Tam's parents.



Tam wins first prize in the Golden Bell Ring contest in a district communication event. Photo: Plan International

Traditional hierarchies within the family and community mean that children's voices often aren't valued or respected. Children are expected to listen and absorb knowledge but not to be listened to themselves or learnt from. However, children can be excellent communicators to their peers, particularly when the child facilitators are equipped with tools and materials (like the flipchart) and engaging games to help build the understanding of others.

Improving children's knowledge and understanding of climate change is only one aspect of the project, and doesn't happen in isolation. The knowledge children bring home is always relevant to other project activities that are engaging parents in the community, such as alternative livelihood models. The relevance of the children's knowledge means parents are more receptive to learning from their children.

<sup>15</sup>Aschermann, J L (2001) Children teaching and learning in peer collaborative interactions. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Accessed 18 April 2015: <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-04252001-140637/unrestricted/Thesis.pdf>.



## Case study Philippines

### Raising climate change awareness through music

When given the opportunity to act as engaged and empowered members of a community, children have the innovation, creativity and vision to actively participate in awareness-raising, planning and decision-making around climate change.<sup>16</sup>

Empowering children to initiate this conversation was a key priority of the CBA project in Aurora province. The project, in collaboration with the child-led radio program *Boses ng Kabataan (Voice of the Youth)*\* launched a jingle-making contest on climate change in June 2013 with the theme: Developing child advocates for climate change resilience.

Schools in the Philippines use music to aid in the learning process and to foster self-expression among children and youth, forming an integral part of alternative education models. Music is also used to educate and inform the general public on issues affecting them and act as a strong advocacy tool for awareness campaigns and social mobilisations. The combination of music and climate change advocacy in the context of the project, facilitated an innovative and engaging new opportunity for children to raise their voices in their community about the issues most affecting them.

Angie is the youngest of three children and lives in Aurora. She is a member of the school-based CC-CBA children's group at the Aurora National High School. As part of the group Angie has learned a lot about climate change and its impacts on her community through regular education sessions. She has also participated in a number of related environmental activities, such as cleaning up the local area and tree planting.

With a passion for music and song writing, Angie was first in line when she heard of the jingle-making contest. Her composition, *Masdan Mo Ang Iyong Paligid* (Look Around You), was declared the winner of the secondary school level competition.

"I was inspired by my grandfather. He is a hardworking farmer who provides food for our family," said Angie.

"Learning about climate change, I can see and understand how it will affect his livelihood and our lives. Climate change will bring stronger typhoons and other extreme weather events. It will cause flooding and destruction of rice crops, which means loss of income and food shortages – not only to my family but to others who depend on agriculture too. This message is what I want other children and adults to understand."

The winning entries, one for elementary and one for the secondary school division, were used as the official program jingles for the *Boses ng Kabataan* radio program that aired live every Saturday in Baler from August to December 2013. The songs on climate change, adaptation and disaster risk reduction were also used to inspire positive climate change actions within the broader community.

Angie believes that using modern music trends, such as rap and pop, helps her reach and relate to other children her age and younger. She felt the jingle competition provided the radio program and her school CC-CBA group with a powerful tool for disseminating information about how these issues affect children and their surroundings in a fun and cool way.

Improving the quality and availability of climate change education is key in achieving long-term change. While schools are ideal platforms for increasing children's knowledge, the most effective learning programs go beyond schools and into the community.<sup>17</sup>

Having gained an understanding of the harmful effects of a changing climate, compounded by indifference among people around her, Angie hopes that through her song she can touch and inspire other children to speak up. She also hopes that through playing their songs on the radio, more people can hear them and be inspired to take positive action on climate change.

\*To learn more about youth radio broadcasting, see the case study in Chapter IV.



Angie writes songs with her bandmates. Photo: Save the Children



A schoolgirl creates her CBA storybook. Photo: Save the Children

<sup>16</sup>Act to adapt: Child-centred climate change adaptation project in Asia and the Pacific, weAdapt. Accessed April 2015: <https://weadapt.org/knowledge-base/community-based-adaptation/act-to-adapt>

<sup>17</sup>Climate change and children, UNICEF. Accessed April 2015: [http://www.ecdgroup.com/docs/lib\\_004700305.pdf](http://www.ecdgroup.com/docs/lib_004700305.pdf)

## CHAPTER II BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE

It is well documented that climate change will disproportionately impact those who face socio-economic inequalities. Across Asia, this includes some of the most vulnerable groups – women, children and individuals with a disability – who are likely to be more susceptible to extreme weather events, extreme heat, environmental degradation and market volatility. Their capacity to build a set of sustainable livelihoods will be challenged. For the purposes of this chapter, a livelihood is a means of making a living. It “encompasses people’s capabilities, assets, income and activities required to secure the necessities of life”.<sup>18</sup>

Weather-related disasters are often the most noticeable aspect of climate change. They are a valuable and valid entry-point for much of the work that is carried out in community-based adaptation (CBA). While this entry point certainly poses a number of challenges in terms of the community’s understanding of long-term climatic trends, it also provides a more fertile ground for introducing some of the more slow-onset and long-term impacts of climate change that can be addressed through insurance, social funds and livelihood diversification as key components of CBA.

In the last 20 years the impact of disasters has been overwhelming with 4.4 billion people affected – more than half of them children – 1.3 million people killed and US\$2 trillion in economic losses.<sup>19</sup> In 2014 alone, half of the world’s 226 disasters occurred in the Asia-Pacific. The region experienced severe storms, cross-border floods and landslides, which accounted for 85 percent of all disasters.<sup>20</sup> Economic losses from disaster events will continue to increase and heavily burden existing socio-political institutions and governance frameworks.

Although less dramatic than disasters, slow-onset changes also pose a risk to livelihoods. Crops that have sustained families for generations are increasingly under pressure as seasons are changing and the requisite periods of rainfall and sunshine are now unreliable. Animals that used to thrive in certain locations are now plagued by disease or unable to tolerate longer cold spells. Just as important as protecting communities from natural hazards and disasters is building their resilience to these gradual changes. The impacts of these changes on children can be severe, ranging from food insecurity and malnutrition to economic impacts on the household that can lead them to drop out of school.

Building climate resilience can take many forms. One primary component of resilience simply relates to the level of adequate and timely knowledge that children, communities and government institutions are made aware of. However, this acquisition of knowledge is not sufficient; communities must also be given skills through which they can apply this knowledge. In addition, institutional frameworks must be supported so resilience activities can be sustained. Mechanisms such as insurance, social funds and the diversification of livelihood options are just some of the activities that were implemented across the Philippines and Vietnam as part of the CBA project. Communities were provided with the necessary training (provision of

knowledge) and support (ongoing technical support from NGOs and government institutions) to carry out locally relevant climate change adaptation activities.

Communities were empowered to think beyond their present and start thinking about their future. Farmers in Vietnam adopted agricultural models to ensure they were no longer reliant on a single source of income, especially when that income is regularly impacted by environmental shocks. In the Philippines, community members worked together to set up a savings and loan scheme that provided them with a financial buffer in case of crop failures or disasters.

In both countries, individuals were working together with local partner organisations and government bodies to address how best to adapt to climate change and what techniques, tools or activities would best suit their needs within their own contexts. It was the process as much as the outcome that proved important to both the technical stakeholders and beneficiaries. The development of a set of livelihood options or insurance models is not a static process and should not be blankly replicated across communities. While the activities should be locally relevant they should also mirror an ongoing set of discussions that take place between relevant stakeholders. It is this process of updating, tweaking or adapting a model that will enable communities to build their resilience to climate change and safeguard the future for children.

### Key lessons

- Forums that bring together relevant scientific bodies with community members should be facilitated within CBA projects to ensure the exchange of climate relevant information is readily available, understandable and practical. Scientists can also benefit from local level data and experiences, as well as traditional knowledge.
- It’s important to systematically track market conditions in the development and implementation of livelihood models and ensure beneficiaries have an understanding of climate- and market-related risks throughout the decision-making process.
- Interventions must be owned by the participating families, schools and communities. This is to ensure they are economically viable – i.e. beneficiaries must contribute some of their own funds, time and/or materials – as well as to ensure the sustainability of the actions after the project completion.
- Collaborating with local technical departments to support the CBA livelihood models enhances both cost efficiency and sustainability of these models. The project worked closely with the district-level Agriculture Extension Offices and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Vietnam to provide technical training courses for farmers. This increased the role and responsibility of local agencies and departments to provide better services for farmers. Project staff and local technical officials exchanged knowledge and experiences on CBA models, benefitting both the project beneficiaries (direct and indirect) but also government agencies. Furthermore, the project benefitted from inputs by relevant technical agencies, such as the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration and the Climate Change Commission, to better inform and enhance project outcomes.

<sup>18</sup>What is a livelihood? International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Accessed 12 April 2015: <https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/from-crisis-to-recovery/what-is-a-livelihood/>

<sup>19</sup>Kellet, J (2014) Disaster risk reduction makes development sustainable: Oxfam report

<sup>20</sup>Natural disasters in Asia and the Pacific: 2014 Year in review. UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Accessed April 2015: <http://www.unescap.org/news/enhanced-regional-cooperation-key-building-resilience-floods-and-landslides>

## Case study Vietnam

### Raising pigs and biogas: Strengthening existing livelihood models

The primary form of agriculture in Vietnam’s Quang Nam province is rice, which makes up 75 percent of farm land. Peanuts, maize and commercial crops are generally grown on the remaining land. However, studies suggest that climate change could lower agricultural productivity by as much as 15 percent in Vietnam by 2080.<sup>21</sup>

Many people in Quang Nam rely on farming for food and income, and it has been crucial for Save the Children’s CBA project to support alternative livelihood models suited to the location, and increase local knowledge of adaptive farming and animal raising. This approach lays the foundation for sustainable adaptation that builds resilience in the community and opens up opportunities for the diversification of livelihoods, which may reduce exposure to risk and market volatility.

Nguyen Xuan Thong lives in the Thang Binh district of Quang Nam with his wife and five children. His youngest is 11 and attending school. Another of his children has a disability so stays at home. To support his family, Thong had been farming rice and raising pigs with limited success. He has found it difficult to keep his pigs healthy and gaining weight due to extreme weather in his province.

When Thong’s son participated in the project’s climate change resilience activities at school he passed on the information he was learning to his family. The knowledge Thong gained about how climate change can contribute to certain diseases, and the factors that can affect the health of his family and community, compelled him to register for the new livelihood project in his community.

In addition to receiving one sow and 50 percent of the costs to build a pig pen, Thong and his wife also attended training sessions with other villagers and staff from the Agriculture Extension Centre. In these sessions they learned techniques to ensure their pigs could thrive despite the changing weather. These included building the pig pen with sloping floors and orienting them to avoid cross breezes; the separation of the piglets from their mother; adding a light to warm piglets; cutting down sharp teeth; and the neutering of male pigs when they are five days old, which allows them to grow faster. This training has all contributed to the increased wellbeing of Thong’s livestock, so that they are healthier, reach maturation and can be sold for meat at a good price.

Thong learned how to use his pig waste to produce biogas – a sustainable energy source – through the installation of a biogas digester. Each day his pigs produce five to six hours’ worth of gas, which has saved the family time and money, as well as saving countless trees because Thong no longer needs to go to the forest and cut down trees for firewood.



Thong’s biogas pressure gauge measures gas pressure in the tank. Once released, the biogas produces 5–6 hours of fuel for cooking. Photo: Save the Children

As a result of the family’s achievements, three other families have replicated the biogas model by their own means. To ensure his neighbours have accurately set-up their new waste treatment centre and pig pens, Thong regularly visits to check out their work, communicate his expertise and share experiences and lessons learned.

When asked whether he would prefer to be given additional technical training or another sow, Thong explained he would favour the skill-set training as he expects this will be the most beneficial in the long term.

Training local villagers with the skills required to adapt to climate change in a locally relevant way has introduced the members of this community to skill development and livelihood diversification. They are supported to strengthen existing livelihoods, ensuring these farming models are more sustainable and cost-effective, and that they can increase income, inspire confidence and encourage community ownership to achieve long-term resilience.

<sup>21</sup>Bruun, O and Casse, T (2013) On the frontiers of climate and environmental change: Vulnerabilities and adaptations in central Vietnam. Accessed April 2015: [https://books.google.com.au/books?id=1RxGAAQAQBAJ&pg=PA44&pg=PA44&dq=quang+nam+mountainous+climate+change&source=bl&ots=TIgxsZnWEa&sig=45wqN4XaEMp2QkF9lyOCn0\\_5k4o&hl=en&sa=X&ei=bbUkVaOGN0ji8gX0k0cIAQ&ved=0CCIQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=quang%20nam%20mountainous%20climate%20change&f=false](https://books.google.com.au/books?id=1RxGAAQAQBAJ&pg=PA44&pg=PA44&dq=quang+nam+mountainous+climate+change&source=bl&ots=TIgxsZnWEa&sig=45wqN4XaEMp2QkF9lyOCn0_5k4o&hl=en&sa=X&ei=bbUkVaOGN0ji8gX0k0cIAQ&ved=0CCIQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=quang%20nam%20mountainous%20climate%20change&f=false)

## Case study Philippines

### Community savings: Using social funds to act on climate change

In Northern Samar, in the Visayas region of the Philippines, the people of barangay Hangi<sup>22</sup> have benefited from a Plan International program that has supported communities to establish savings groups. The community has since become an example of the potential of these groups.

Lesinia Tafalla, known as Linlin, is a Barangay Nutrition Scholar and a Community Volunteer. Linlin is also the initiator of a savings project in Hangi. Her journey began with a five-day Community-Managed Saving and Credit Association training offered by the CBA project at the University of Eastern Philippines in Northern Samar. It was attended by 28 selected community volunteers just like Linlin.

Although the training armed Linlin with knowledge on how a community savings program can facilitate financial aid and support among its members, it was still a challenge to introduce the process to her barangay because of existing negative attitudes about mutual credit and savings. People did not believe in the power of individual savings, let alone savings for the whole community. They also did not have access to more traditional lines of credit to allow them to invest in more resilient crops or disaster preparedness. This meant that when misfortune hit in Hangi – disasters like Typhoon Haiyan or slow-onset yearly flooding – families had no savings to rely on. It took one year and continuous lobbying at general barangay assemblies but, finally, with the support of the barangay Captain, Linlin was able to organise the Community Savings Group.

The Community Savings Group is designed for the poor. Members contribute a small amount to the general fund, and can then access money from the fund in times of need with a low interest rate of 2 percent. Loans are prioritised for emergencies, education and livelihoods.

“Noong mag-umpisa kami ... ganito ang purpose ng collective. (When we started, this was the purpose of the collective),” Linlin explained. “Tutulong tayo na gagawa para sa sakit, nanganganak, at kailangan para sa pagbabago ng panahon. (We will help each other ... for the sick and pregnant members, and particularly those who are in need because of changes in the climate).” These changes included covering the damage to houses due to hazards and disasters, buying seeds for planting season and purchasing items for pest-control.

This approach has been replicated in three other project barangays in Las Navas, Northern Samar, establishing a total of 12 groups. These groups have been an effective vehicle for empowering women in the communities, too. Ten of the established 12 groups are women-only.

Aside from being a social fund, the Community Savings Group in Hangi and other savings and loans groups

under the project have proven to be more than just a useful financial arrangement – they have given community members the chance to collaborate and think of other ways to mitigate and prevent climate change.

To date, the four established savings groups in Hangi have implemented waste segregation, stopped burning off their waste, and have begun practising multi-cropping to lessen the dependency on weather-sensitive crops. These activities have been based on the knowledge and education gained through the project, which has provided a holistic approach to increasing the resilience of this community.

All of these outcomes have stemmed from Linlin's efforts to inform her community on climate change based on her own learning from the project activities, and with the mentoring of project staff. The increased community knowledge has also been useful during times of disaster. Barangay officials have started informing residents about upcoming typhoons and evacuating them whenever necessary.

Since the groups were established, extreme weather has damaged harvests for many participants and one member's home was destroyed in a landslide. Having access to credit in these difficult times has prevented the affected group members and their families from experiencing extreme hardship and hunger. The credit has given them the chance to purchase seeds, building materials and food to get them back on their feet.

Having such a committed community leader, as well as the support of the local elected leader, has been critical in the success of this activity. Selecting a project location that had an existing relationship with the project implementer, as well as tapping into the enthusiasm within the community, helped to catalyse momentum for this work. The project was able to build on this interest through the initial education, awareness-raising and advocacy stages of the project. The savings and loans groups are just one part of a suite of activities run in the community to build climate change resilience.



<sup>22</sup>Barangay is the Filipino word for town or village

## Case study Vietnam

### Improving rice yields for ethnic communities in central Vietnam

In Ba To district, Quang Ngai province, the ethnic H're people make their living off the forest and through small-scale agriculture in similar ways to H're groups in other mountainous areas of Vietnam. The impacts of climate change are exacerbating many of the existing challenges to their livelihoods – severe cold spells, droughts and flash floods – all of which result in agricultural losses.

Within the framework of the CBA project, Plan International worked with the Centre for Rural Development (CRD) in Central Vietnam, local authorities and women and men in four communes (Ba Bich, Ba Dinh, Ba To and Ba Xa) to improve the resilience of their winter-spring rice crops.

The project supported farmers to apply improved cultivation methods across every stage of the four-month winter-spring rice planting season, including providing agricultural materials, technical guidance and training, techniques in choosing seed, identifying the right seasons and planting times, care, irrigation and disease prevention. This helped protect the rice from common problems the farmers were facing, such as losses due to cold temperatures in seeding stage and hoar fog in flowering stage.<sup>23</sup>

The project worked with local authorities to conduct hamlet meetings, and selected suitable households and locations for piloting the models. Pham Van Dot, a H're man living in Con Ra hamlet, was one of the leaders in his commune's rice model piloting group. Under his management, technical training brought about great results. After four months of the project, farmers were aware of how to classify and plant seeds, use compost, prepare soil, effectively irrigate and protect their crops from mice.

“The model has helped us to see the effectiveness in applying proper techniques to cultivate rice. It even exceeds our expectations. By using new and healthier kind of seed, the productivity has increased compared to the old seed. The proper irrigation also takes best advantage of fertilisers and helps plants survive through droughts,” explained Dot.

Following these positive results, local authorities and community members have continued to apply these techniques. Farmers are now willing to spend their own money to invest in alternative seeds and other rice production inputs, and apply the introduced techniques. They have also become core agents in multiplying the benefits of these models to other hamlets in the commune by sharing their experiences and achievements.

The project faced several challenges during implementation, including negative weather conditions as well as farmers' limited understanding of different



rice-planting techniques. However, the project utilised the sound scientific advice of CRD to develop robust methods that were able to withstand the weather. Coupled with the approach of the project – in which a few households in each commune piloted the methods first so other community members could see the results and evidence for themselves – people outside the initial project became increasingly active in adopting new techniques to mitigate the risks from climate change.

Dot is a perfect example. When project staff first selected households to pilot the model, he did not volunteer because of his unclear understanding about climate change. However, because of education and awareness-raising activities in the community, he came to better understand climate change and decided to try the model.

“The weather has changed a lot. In the old days, the cold was less severe and the diseases did not spread as fast as nowadays,” explained Dot. “We cultivated rice by following traditional techniques and our yields were dependent on luck. We only took care of our land when we had time and used old seeds, so each household had crops at different times.”

This meant many households were not planting at the ideal time to take advantage of seasonal weather. When he started piloting the model, Dot followed new technical approaches. He started using improved seeds, following a proper crop time, fertilising, watering, preventing pests and mice, and harvesting and storing as trained. Although the complicated steps tired him, his patience and the strong support of project staff saw his crop productivity increase by 80–120 percent.

“Now I understand that if we follow [the] right techniques, the productivity will be higher,” said Dot.

“Because I planted the seed on time, the crops avoided the severe cold when they were small, and they avoided the heavy rain when they started flowering. I also used nylon paper to cover my rice field to manage the irrigation system, increase the fertiliser efficiency and protect my crops from Kani (a kind of mice). We are no longer afraid of irregular and sudden weather changes.”

<sup>23</sup>Hoar Fog: The formation of ice crystals on vegetation, typical in humid and very cold locations.

# CHAPTER III

## MAINSTREAMING CBA INTO POLICY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Long-term systemic change requires more than individual or ad-hoc interventions. Mainstreaming community-based approaches to climate change adaptation into institutional decision-making means many more people will benefit from this approach than any individual project could ever reach. However, development practitioners everywhere know that mainstreaming is much easier to say than to do.

The development agency CARE suggests there are four essential elements for the successful mainstreaming of climate change adaptation: staff and financial resources, leadership, skills and knowledge, and allowing enough time for these changes to take root.<sup>24</sup> Our experiences support this. It's not enough for references to climate change to be incorporated into planning and policy documents. Staff from the relevant levels of government and key partner organisations have to understand and recognise the importance of community-based adaptation (CBA) and incorporate it into practice for the benefits to be sustained.

The primary tool used by Plan International and Save the Children in this particular project was Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (PVCAs), also called Community Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (CVCA) as they are referred to in this report. Through the process of CVCA, communities, government officials, children, teachers and project staff worked together to identify the risks that climate change poses to them, as well as their strengths and potential responses to the identified risks. Those responses were then prioritised.

Plan International and Save the Children worked with relevant levels of government in the Philippines and Vietnam to incorporate the prioritised responses into policy and planning documents. By including government officials in the process of CVCA, it's not only these individual actions that are incorporated into policy and planning, but the CVCA approach is incorporated too. Recognising the voices of the community and children in decision-making helps ensure the interventions are matched with community needs and are owned by the community, furthering a project's long-term sustainability.

Through building the capacity of village, district and provincial officials, as well as community members in our project areas, our organisations have seen an increase in the ability of these departments to apply similar approaches to the policy and plans of other villages and districts.

Based on the outcomes of the CVCA, the projects then provided opportunities for children, schools, community members and local government units to apply for small grants to help them implement some of the prioritised climate change adaptation actions. This allowed children to design, implement and monitor their own interventions.

CVCA is one tool used in CBA, however, its inclusion in child-centred CBA doesn't mean children are responsible for all aspects of adaptation. Rather, children's rights and the impacts of the project on children's lives should be considered at all stages. Adaptation efforts that focus on the family livelihood can be even more important for a child's wellbeing and development as those efforts children implement themselves. Ensuring project activities are coherent and follow a holistic theory of change is essential if the full benefits of a CC-CBA approach are to be realised.

### Key lessons

- Children and community members should be trained in project management and resource mobilisation so they can leverage funding from relevant local, district and national government bodies to continue supporting locally relevant adaptation activities. This will help to sustain project benefits after the project's conclusion.
- Participation is a key element to ensure interventions reach and are 'owned' by the most vulnerable in a community. Understanding how risks affect the most vulnerable – be they children, indigenous groups, women, or people with disabilities – requires their input and engagement. Recognising the additional, often overlooked, skills and knowledge that vulnerable and individual groups bring is equally essential for an interventions' success.
- The CVCA framework provides a strong entry point for children's participation in climate change adaptation project design, implementation and monitoring across all CBA projects. If CVCA analysis and planning is conducted with the support and participation of a wider range of community and government stakeholders, there is every chance that successful initiatives can and will be incorporated into future local development planning.

## Case study Philippines

### Building resilience through Community Vulnerability Capacity Assessments

Before the CBA project came to the disaster-prone area of Hernani in the Eastern Visayas of the Philippines, the municipal government had already established several relevant ordinances in 2012 in response to the exacerbation of existing natural hazards in the area from climate change. Because these ordinances dealt primarily with disaster preparedness – such as allowing forced evacuations of vulnerable households and preparation for calamities – rather than the full set of climate change impacts, Vice Mayor Wilmar Candido felt Hernani was only taking small steps towards long-term climate change adaptation. As such, the CBA project was well-received and the local government was eager to learn more about how to better adapt to climate change in Hernani.

To help ensure teamwork around their actions to address climate change, the government authorised the Mayor and local government officials to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with Plan International, which cemented the role of local government in the CBA project.

"From the various trainings from Plan International, we learned about the importance [and role] of local government and various agencies [in climate change]," explained Wilmar.

One of the centrepiece activities of the project in Hernani was the Community Capacity and Vulnerability and Assessments (CVCA). In 2013, the project trained the Municipal Technical Working Group and community volunteer facilitators in CVCA. These new skills were put into play when training participants then conducted CVCA at the community level in the four project partner communities: Carmen, Garawon, Nagaja and San Miguel. The process brought together 125 municipal and community partners, including 49 men and 76 women. There were also 26 children (13 boys and 13 girls) who were actively involved in the CVCA.

Jacob Baje, a community facilitator for the CVCA and the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officer, noted that giving accurate information and ensuring good communication and coordination with people helped increase their capacity to respond to extreme weather changes. The CVCA increased communities' knowledge and understanding of climate change, and linked them with official sources of climate information. It connected relevant actors within a community, too, so that everyone was communicating with each other.

From the CVCA process, Jacob and Wilmar both felt they learned a lot about the different types of hazards and how these affect their communities. According to Wilmar, this will be considered in policy development

at the municipal government level, particularly when it comes to the security of the people and environmental preservation.

As part of his role with the local government, Jacob maintains an automated weather station and transmits local weather information to 13 villages in Hernani. Each village's local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Committee receives these messages and informs their residents. Knowing the needs of his community, Jacob requested the national weather station translate technical terms into layman's language so local officials, communities and children could understand. For example, storm surge was translated into the local Waray language and the locations of incoming storms are now described with respect to known nearby landmarks.

Today, the municipality has integrated climate change adaptation measures and activities into their three-year Executive and Legislative Agenda, the Local Poverty Reduction Action Plan and the Annual Investment Program for 2015–2016. Wilmar also happily noted that the most active people in their municipality have been the children.

"They are in the forefront of activities for information and dissemination [about climate change adaptation]. Noong panahon ko, wala kaming ganyang exposure, at pati mga anak ko sinasabihan ako na masama magsunog o maganda mag-segregate. (During my youthful days, we didn't even have the type of exposure or empowerment that these kids have right now, and even my child tells me it's wrong to burn trash or it's good to segregate waste)," said Wilmar. Children are also included in meetings in the municipal hall, along with other sectors of the community.

About two weeks after the CVCA were conducted, Typhoon Haiyan hit Hernani. The entire project area was shattered. Carmen was the worst affected community where up to 96 percent of homes were wiped out.

"The brunt of climate change impacts is now unfolding right before our face. It is really vital to know more about our vulnerabilities and capacities for us to understand how we could adapt more to the changing climate," said Jacob.



Vice Mayor Wilmar explains the importance of climate change adaptation in school plans. Photo: Plan International

<sup>24</sup>Mainstreaming climate change adaptation: A practitioner's handbook, CARE. Accessed April 2015: [http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/adaptation/CARE\\_VN\\_Mainstreaming\\_Handbook.pdf](http://www.careclimatechange.org/files/adaptation/CARE_VN_Mainstreaming_Handbook.pdf)

## Case study Vietnam

### Integrating climate change into the development planning process

Vietnam was ranked among the five countries most likely to be affected by climate change<sup>25</sup>, with the regions of Tien Giang in the southern provinces and Quang Nam in the central provinces already experiencing rising sea levels, more erratic rainfall patterns, increased flooding and heatwaves, and coastline erosion. In recent years, the Mekong delta has come under a significant amount of stress as economic and environmental pressures rise and small-scale farmers have increasingly faced difficulties in securing a stable income from their livelihoods.

Climate change adaptation planning across Vietnam has often taken place in isolation of the broader development agenda and has too narrowly focused on the impacts of climate change. Shifting the focus away from climate change adaptation and ensuring that activities, tools and mechanisms become embedded in the wider set of development policies can ensure that longer term climate sensitive development planning practices take place.

In 2014, Save the Children and local authorities in the Tien Giang and Quang Nam provinces facilitated a planning process with 14 communes to integrate climate change adaptation into the provincial Socio-Economic Development Plans (SEDP).

The five-year SEDPs play an important role in planning and budgeting for the local development agendas. The SEDPs set out a number of specific objectives and targets and are underpinned by institutional and financial arrangements.<sup>26</sup>



Children developing a hazard map at the Tien Giang CVCA meeting. Photo: Save the Children

To inform the SEDP process, a series of Community Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (CVCA) workshops were undertaken across the provinces. These workshops took place in both the community and school settings to include a range of stakeholders, including children and youth.

In Tien Giang, for example, the CVCA took place in local

secondary schools. Thuy was one of 10 children invited to participate in the development of the commune action plan for adaptation to climate change in her school. Her group learned about and discussed the concepts of vulnerability, disasters, climate change and hazard mapping. Once the children had taken part in the lesson they were then asked to develop and present their own proposed solutions for minimising the negative impacts of climate change on their community. Thuy said it felt good to be treated equally with the adults in voicing her opinions on the commune action plan. She thinks her ideas were listened to and included in the resulting action plan.

In the commune of Gia Thuan, Mr. Lam enthusiastically discussed his intentions of telling as many people as possible about climate change. He found the community workshops to be incredibly valuable and enriching. They not only increased his knowledge on climate change but he was also exposed to a number of tools – harvest and hazard calendars, commune risk mapping, climate change planning – that would significantly help the community with their planning processes.

As a result of these workshops, the Tien Giang province hosted a consultation workshop with the provincial, district and commune authorities, as well as with other government agencies and commune leaders. The experiences of the commune's participatory process were shared and discussions ensued around how best to align commune plans with the district SEDP strategy. It was agreed that the project should continue working with the Tien Giang province Department of Planning and Investment to further replicate the planning process across other communes in the province.

Similarly, in Quang Nam province, project staff and local government held a series of CVCA workshops engaging more than 400 participants (half of which were children) from seven communes. The workshops not only provided an opportunity for information dissemination but they particularly sought to provide a space that was conducive to sharing perspectives, ideas, concerns and recommendations among both children and adults. Some of the inputs put forward by children included the planting of trees along the roads and around their schools to provide added shade on hot days and the upgrading of village roads that took into account climate change impacts.

Following these workshops, the community's inputs were successfully integrated into the 2015 SEDP and have been supported by local authorities for longer-term implementation. For example, the government recently approved the construction of a dyke to help stop saltwater intrusion into agricultural land.

This process of taking up community recommendations has allowed community members to feel a sense of ownership across the process and attach a high level of value to it. Ensuring the ongoing participation of communities, including children, will increase the likelihood that community needs are integrated in the SEDPs.

## Case study Philippines

### The role of local government in mainstreaming climate change adaptation

Nicasio G. Gatchalian is a man that wears many hats. He is the Municipal Planning Development Coordinator, the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Officer, Chairman of a number of committees and technical working groups<sup>27</sup> in the Local Government Unit (LGU), and is a fervent supporter and overall coordinator of the Save the Children CBA project in the coastal province of Aurora. The province is made up of eight municipalities, including Maria Aurora where the project started out as a pilot across five of its 40 barangays.

"The project [was] very timely given the unpredictability of our weather and climate and its effects on our daily lives," explained Nicasio.

**"Climate change triggers worsening climate-related hazards, and if you are not prepared [for] these hazards, especially those that are projected to worsen like typhoons, disasters [will] surely ensue."**

Maria Aurora is the only non-coastal municipality in the province and is prone to landslides, flash floods, typhoons, heavy rainfall and flooding. The need to understand climate change and its impacts was a key reason Nicasio became involved in the project.

"[I encouraged] LGU officials, especially the decision-makers, such as the Mayor and members of the municipal council, to also know more about climate change and disaster preparedness and integrate them into the planning processes and development strategies of the municipality," said Nicasio.

In 2012, the project began by sensitising children, community residents, teachers and LGU personnel on the origins, science, impacts and possible adaptation techniques to climate change. Simultaneously, CVCA were carried out across all five barangays, allowing children and community members to critically analyse and better understand their core vulnerabilities and risks.

The results of the CVCA process "reinforced previous disaster risk reduction plans. Applying the climate risk assessment process [made] disaster preparedness more forward looking, increasing our survival capacity," said Nicasio.

"[Now we are] able to set appropriate actions and budget for various disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation activities [that] minimise impacts of both climate-related and geo-physical hazards in the locality."

"With factual information based on existing conditions, the municipal council is now fully aware and supportive of all the proposals on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, because they know [they] are highly regarded and supported by various sectors and people in the municipality," explained Nicasio.

As part of the project, the Small Grants Initiatives (SGI) was launched. The initiative is a funding mechanism to support short-term CBA projects that are implemented by community-based organisations, students and their parents. The development of the SGI was based on the outcomes from the CVCA process and was designed to enhance community ownership and strengthen their capacity to drive forward their own CBA projects.<sup>28</sup> In essence, SGIs are mini pilot projects that will serve as potential springboards to access larger sources of funding from the government to replicate the projects.

The ties between the community members and local government units were further strengthened through the formation of a Technical Working Group (TWG) within the local government unit, which comprised the Municipal Planning and Development Officer, the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Officer, the Municipal Agriculture Office, the Municipal Environment and Natural Resource Office and the Treasurer's Office. The TWG was tasked with evaluating and approving the SGI proposals, thus reinforcing working relationships between local government offices, and between government and communities.

"The lessons we gained from the project were shared with the other 35 barangays here in Maria Aurora," said Nicasio. "This was also very timely as our Comprehensive Land Use Plans expired last August. Hence, we are now in the process of updating it as required by law. This gives us the opportunity to enhance it with disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation principles."

In December 2014, the CVCA process was completed across all 40 barangays. In January 2015, the results were integrated during a workshop and will be used by the Municipal Planning and Development Office for Maria Aurora's five-year Comprehensive Development Plan 2016–2020.

"Here we will ensure that disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation priorities will be integrated and given the right priority in the planning process," emphasised Nicasio.

This case not only illustrates the importance of comprehensively including community members and children in the elaboration of future development plans but also demonstrates the importance of having a climate change champion that is strategically placed to elevate the importance and relevance of climate change adaptation, and to ensure it does not disappear from the local government agenda. Having champions at multiple levels across multiple stakeholder groups will strengthen the ability of communities and government units to better respond and build resilience in an uncertain future.

<sup>25</sup>GFDRR Country Profile for Vietnam.

<sup>26</sup>OECD (2012) Policy dialogue on Aid for Trade. Managing Aid for Trade and development results. Vietnam case study. Accessed April 2015: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/aft/VietnamCaseStudy.pdf>

<sup>27</sup>This includes chairing the Bid and Awards Committee (BAC) and the Solid Waste Management (SWM). He is also the facilitator of the municipality's Comprehensive Land Use Planning (CLUP) and the Local Government Unites Legislative Agenda.

<sup>28</sup>The small grant initiatives comprised mangrove rehabilitation, diversification of vegetable planting and campaign awareness-raising across schools.

## Case study Vietnam

### Integrating climate change into Socio-Economic Development Plans: A bottom-up approach

Dai Tu is one of two project districts in Thai Nguyen province of Vietnam. It's a poor mountainous district, home to different ethnic minority groups such as Tay, Nung, Dao and San Diu. Dai Tu suffers from many manifestations of climate change, including droughts, floods, landslides, cold spells and extreme weather, all of which heavily affect the daily life and production of local people. Since 2012, the CBA project has supported the initiation of climate change activities for school students and communities that teach them about climate adaptive livelihood models and the integration of climate change adaptation into local Socio-Economic Development Plans (SEDPs).

Na Mao commune is one of the five communes in Thai Nguyen that have completed the integration of climate change adaptation into the commune SEDP. This is an achievement of not only the project staff but also the project partners who have worked side-by-side with Plan International on the project activities since the very first day.

This story is about Mr. Phan Thanh Tung, Vice-Chairman of the Commune Project Management Board. He, too, has been working with the project since the beginning. He has actively participated in and coordinated project activities at the commune and district levels. These include communication activities, CVCAs, supporting livelihood models and integrating climate change adaptation into the local SEDP process. Many of these activities were strange to begin with for Tung.

"Plan's approach is very odd. I felt that when I first joined," said Tung. "All the processes are participatory, including the SEDP process that is always inherently understood as top-down and the job of local authorities. In the past, we did not consult or involve local communities in the planning processes."

"We have realised the differences brought about by engaging communities in planning processes. Plan also helped us understand better about our own disaster and climate change situations, the need of taking these issues into consideration for planning and how to do that."

One of the key activities of the project was the CVCA, where community members identified the risks climate change poses to their community, and then prioritised potential responses and actions.

"I attended the trainings on climate change and CVCA, facilitated the CVCA process with local communities and schools, and collected and summarised local climate change adaptation inputs to bring into the commune SEDP," explained Tung.

"These solutions were prioritised and we submitted the results to the Commune People's Committee and

"During the CVCA process, students and local communities analysed their own situations of disaster and climate change and came up with their solutions."

then the People's Council for approval. Now we have a commune SEDP plan with the climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction activities included, which is an achievement to us. And, more importantly, it comes from local people," said Trung.

"We used to omit disaster and climate change risks while planning. We saw the impacts but generally we did not know how to integrate it into our SEDP process, for example, which process and tools to adopt, or what solutions to bring in."

Over the last year, some of the activities have been put into action – some funded by the project and some self-funded by the commune and communities. Examples of the project-funded activities include climate change adaptation livelihood models such as cold-resistant tea planting, composting and planting improved varieties of grass for cattle feed during cold seasons. The commune and community-funded actions focus on the development and diversification of agricultural models – like expanding to include corn or chicken – and the construction of pump stations or water canals to ensure water security during droughts.

"It is a great change I would say in our mindset. Before taking part in the project, I had never imagined the commune planning process would look like this. The plan reflects local communities' desires and embraces solutions to disaster and climate change risks," said Tung.

"I am most impressed with the climate change adaptation integrated SEDP activity and climate change adaptation in child education. Both are participatory processes. We would love to maintain these activities within our local limited budget because now we know how to do it."

"I think our project lessons should be shared among different communes [outside the project]. So far our sharing only comes through personal channels. It would be much better if there were more events and channels for us to share these lessons better to other communes and communities."



# CHAPTER IV

## CHILDREN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

The question of why to include children in community-based adaptation (CBA) activities can be answered in a number of ways. It can be centred around justice – children have contributed the least to the causes of climate change and yet are going to feel its impacts throughout their lives. They are often more vulnerable than adults to those impacts.<sup>29</sup> It can focus on rights – that children’s rights should be included in decisions that affect them are clearly defined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. But the answer can also be found by looking at children as effective agents of change.

Children and young people have great capacity to influence change, often in indirect ways. Parents can be highly receptive to messages from their children about how they want the world to look, but given natural hierarchies, it is usually more appropriate for these messages to come through mediums like theatre and stories. Yet more than just influencing the actions of others, children can themselves implement actions.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout our projects, we’ve seen children design, implement and monitor adaptation actions appropriate for their age and context. These range from planting vegetable gardens at school – where the profits from selling harvests are channelled back to the children’s climate clubs to fund further actions – to mangrove or tree planting to protect waterfront structures from floods and storms. They work with adults and their municipal governments on improved waste disposal systems, and they conduct education and community outreach.

Many of the climate-related actions children have participated in are also building their resilience more generally. In Vietnam, learning about alternative livelihood models implemented in their community provides students with the opportunity to understand climate change adaptation efforts in their immediate context, while at the same time providing additional

skills in how to communicate their experiences. Similarly, the *Bullit Broadcasters* (child broadcasters) in the Philippines have not only increased their knowledge and understanding of climate change, but added an otherwise inaccessible skill set in radio presentation and interviewing.

It will not be long before these children and young people are adults, raising their own families and needing livelihoods to support them. Building their capacity and understanding now helps to climate-proof their lives, giving them the skills and knowledge to continue to adapt to whatever shocks, stresses and impacts they come across in their current and adult lives.

### Key lessons

- To sustain the benefits of activities beyond the life of the project and into the future, CBA projects should not limit engagement to adults and government officials but holistically engage children and young people throughout the entire project cycle. Harnessing the energies and enthusiasms of children for positive change can have an impact on decision-makers at all levels of communities and governments.
- Children and young people can be effective agents for sharing messages, building awareness and changing behaviour. Utilising communication channels that they feel comfortable with to incorporate climate change messages can empower children to inform others and advocate around this topic.



Students after a session on CBA communication training. Photo: Plan International

## Case study Vietnam

### A holistic approach to resilience

The H’Re people are a small ethnic minority group whose population live only in some mountainous areas of Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh provinces in central Vietnam. For many years, the agricultural production of the H’Re people relied heavily on slash-and-burn and paddy rice. Despite improvements in recent years, partly due to the country’s economic development, H’Re communities remain poor and vulnerable, particularly in the face of climate change and disasters. The CBA project has been working in the region to build resilience through a holistic approach, starting with children.

Hang is a H’Re girl in grade nine. In her school there were 12 student facilitators who were trained in climate change knowledge and communication skills as part of the project. Hang attended these trainings and soon she also became an active facilitator of climate change communication activities. She started facilitating small group communication sessions using flipcharts and games, and became a core participant of other communication activities and events organised by the project, such as the Golden Bell Ring contest, drawing contests, performances and drama.<sup>31</sup>

“She’s very active. She doesn’t just keep to herself. I notice she often reminds her friends of keeping the school environment clean by picking up litter, too,” said Hang’s teacher, Tran Thi Dat.

Hang also took part in photography and story-writing classes organised by Plan International as part of the project. Students visited some of the alternative livelihood models that have been supported by the project to collect their stories.

This activity had several purposes. It equipped students with basic skills in a range of communication mediums so they can share their perspectives with other audiences. It gave students a chance to explore other life activities through interviewing farmers about their farming and cropping techniques. And it linked the school-based and community activities so that the students could see the practical application of their knowledge. It also helped community members to see young people learning about climate change, building their trust and confidence in the future of their community.

Hang and her friends learnt about a field that had previously been left fallow because the decreasing rainfall meant rice and other crops could no longer grow there. With support from the project, farmers are now growing peanuts on the land, which require less water.

“It was so exciting! My friends and I enjoyed going to field to ask questions and take pictures of the farmers with their field. We felt like we were doing real adult’s work,” said Hang.

At school, Hang and her friends also joined a CVCA process, which helped the school identify climate threats

and hazards, and to rank possible responses. With the help of their teachers, the students decided to develop a Green Bulletin in their school – a board that exhibits all the related environmental and climate change materials they have collected and created, such as drawings, booklets, pictures and stories. Hang also talked with her parents about the things she learnt from the school activities.

“I told them not to burn the post-harvest straw but collect it for cattle’s feed because it’s better for the environment. I told them not to burn the forest as well,” said Hang.

The project is taking a multi-pronged approach to increasing the resilience of these vulnerable groups – working directly with communities to increase their understanding of climate change and its impacts. It supports the community to trial alternative crops and livelihood models, and works with children to build their awareness and help them see how their efforts can make a difference.

“It is not easy to change the long-standing farming culture of the H’Re communities in this area,” explains Sung from Plan International Vietnam’s Quang Ngai office. “Because the changing climate and disasters pose risks to their traditional production methods, it is important to switch to more sustainable cultivation practices. But it takes time.”

As with the other examples mentioned in this report, one of the key lessons for this work is the added value of a holistic approach to CBA. Children are the future custodians of their communities, and it’s important that our interventions include them. Gradually, decision-making will be handed over to them, and through building their capacity and understanding of the impacts that climate change has on their lives, and options to address these impacts, the project is helping ensure their resilience.



Hang visits a peanut model farm to write her adaptation story and take photographs. Photo: Plan International

<sup>29</sup>Venton, C (2014) ‘Why we need a child-centred approach to adaptation’, The challenges of climate change: Children on the front line, Innocenti Insight, Florence, UNICEF Office of Research  
<sup>30</sup>United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (2010) Advocacy toolkit: A guide to influencing decisions that improve children’s lives, New York. Accessed 18 April 2015: [http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Advocacy\\_Toolkit.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/evaluation/files/Advocacy_Toolkit.pdf)

<sup>31</sup>The Golden Bell Ring contest is a popular Vietnamese TV game show (originally from Korea) where college students compete with each other in terms of general knowledge. A hundred students from the same school (and different schools in the later rounds) will sit together in a yard answering questions on a board. Whoever stays the last will win the game. This has been adopted for many of Plan’s climate change and disaster preparedness projects as a game for children.

## Case study Philippines

### Small voices of truth

“Oh yes! It’s Friday now! We are going On Air again,” DJ Wena exclaims as she rushes home from school to prepare her things before jumping in the vehicle that will take them to Borongan City where a local radio station hosts their children’s radio broadcasting program.

Wena, 12-years-old, is one of the *Bulilit Brodkasters* (child broadcasters) from a small barangay in Eastern Samar. She is one of the main anchors of the radio program *Boses ng Kabataan, Tingog han Kamatuoran*, which translates as *Voice of the Youth, Sound of the Truth*. It is a weekly children’s radio program on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. While many initiatives linking radio and climate change focus on basic delivery of information to farmers,<sup>32</sup> *Boses ng Kabataan* is a child-led initiative that aims to bridge the gap between information sharing and active engagement.

As communities in the Philippines experience the increasing impacts of climate change, innovative methods of advocacy and action that harness the voices of children are being explored. One such technique is community radio, which can connect local communities with climate change information through a low cost and accessible medium.<sup>33</sup>

Utilising radio to advocate for climate change can strengthen children’s voices, provide a platform for sharing knowledge, and challenge socio-political power relations that may contribute to vulnerability.<sup>34</sup>

As the most vulnerable to impacts of climate change, children’s participation is vital in discussion and advocacy around this issue, and is a key priority for the CBA project.

*Boses ng Kabataan* also runs in Aurora Province, in the north of the Philippines. Johnber Kheen Y. Repato was one of the first students who trained to become a *Bulilit Brodkaster* in Aurora in 2013. During his shows ‘Kuya Kheen’ (Johnber’s stage name) facilitated discussion around the science of climate change, disaster preparedness, the impacts of climate change on children’s rights, weather information, and climate change adaptation efforts in communities and schools. Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction experts were often invited onto the show to talk about climate change and answer phone-in or text questions from listeners. Research has found that such interactive programming creates a platform for two-way exchanges and learning, boosting the uptake of information.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to information dissemination and advocacy, an equally important benefit of the program is the empowering effect it has on children and youth; both

listeners and broadcasters. Through his participation Johnber overcame his shy nature and nerves, and built his confidence in public speaking and leading important conversations around climate change. As a *Bulilit Brodkaster* he developed advocacy strategies to inform and engage his listeners and employed his newfound ‘fame’ to positively influence his peers and community.

DJ Wena has had a similar experience. “This radio program changed me a lot. I’m completely a different child now. I was too shy and timid before. I was literally trembling during my first time to hold and speak in a microphone,” she says.

“But now, my confidence really soared! I can write my scripts and run it on air! I have realised that radio is a useful tool to educate my co-children and their families in the community on climate change and disasters. People can hear the radio even if electricity is out. It is very important for people to know about climate change because it will matter to their survival in the coming days.”

Johnber’s passion and enthusiasm for sharing the message of climate change, adaptation and disaster risk reduction has taken his action to a national level. Since graduating from high school, Johnber continues to utilise the skills he’s learned and confidence he has gained by working on the INC-TV Videography Team, editing interviews, music videos and documentaries. INC-TV is a Philippine National TV Station owned and operated by the religious group Iglesia ni Cristo. It services millions of members of the Iglesia ni Cristo in the Philippines and around the world.

“Some of my videos include issues on child rights and climate change because these are topics more people, especially children, should be aware of,” said Johnber.



Kuya Kheen during a live broadcast of *Boses ng Kabataan*. Photo: Save the Children

## Case study Vietnam

### Children’s clubs as catalysts for climate change action

Accessibility to information through Save the Children’s child clubs plays an important role in providing a springboard for climate change action and advocacy. As Dung from a primary school in Tien Giang province explains, “I like the club because we learn about how to adapt to climate change.”

The club has an open door policy and attracts school-children, children not in school and children with disabilities. The club meetings are held at least once a month within the communities and are structured around a child-led model where all children are encouraged to lead activities and work together on developing climate change awareness-raising activities across their classrooms, schools and communities.

Dung has recently been appointed the President of her club and leads the children in a number of interactive activities. One topic raised in the club addressed the skills required to adapt to climate change. To learn and understand best practices, Dung initiated role-play activities, the *Do’s and Don’ts* game for reducing climate change, and the drawing of their dream school – one that is more resilient to climate change.

While the education component of the club attracts many children, what keeps children like Dung interested are the engaging activities. Dung believes the best thing about the club is being able to organise fun activities for her friends to help them learn about climate change and promote change across their community. Dung is also able to share

the information with her family.

“I’ve told my family we need to grow trees to help the environment and reduce climate change impacts,” said Dung.

Dung has also taught her family about what to do if they are caught in the middle of a storm or a cyclone. When asked about the future, she said: “I’d like to help more and more friends and their families learn how to adapt to climate change and reduce activities that lead to global warming.”

To further promote child-led knowledge sharing, children in Tien Giang participated in an energy- and water-saving campaign. After collecting their home electricity and water bills, and closely examining their family’s consumption rates, children were taught simple resource-saving techniques that could be applied across each of their households, such as switching off lights and electrical appliances or ensuring water taps were correctly closed. This process allowed children to advocate to their parents the need to be more sensitive to their environment, and also provided their families with the potential to save money. Each subsequent month, the children analysed the household bills to monitor progress and ensure that usage was indeed reduced.

In the first three months of the project just over 8.4 million VND (USD\$388) was saved across the participating communities – a huge financial saving for the families as well as for the environment. Over time, it is hoped that practices that marry better environmental awareness with cost-saving initiatives will become more firmly embedded in households. By participating in these campaigns, children demonstrate their ability to absorb information and put this information into action.



Dung leading a climate change activity in her child club. Photo: Save the Children

<sup>32</sup>Community radio and climate change, Eldis. Accessed April 2015: <http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/climate-change/key-issues/community-radio-and-climate-change#.VSM2E4GUfPA>

<sup>33</sup>Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.



# CHAPTER V

## THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION TO MOBILISE ACTION AND REPLICATION

Communication plays an important role in community-based adaptation (CBA), not only as a means to share information and engage and mobilise communities in behaviour change, but as a useful tool in advocacy for policy makers. Effective communication among children, communities or local government officials can increase the understanding and ability of these stakeholders to plan for current and future climate change impacts. Communicating CBA provides an opportunity to shift the focus from impacts to action, strengthening the agency of children and their community to make a choice for change. The type of communication strategies and tools will vary depending on who you are trying to communicate with and for what purpose.

Communicating across knowledge systems can be a difficult and daunting task for stakeholders.<sup>36</sup> Empowering children and their communities to lead communications creates ownership and credibility with the audience, building on existing relationships and linking more strongly to the local identity and context. Local communicators are more likely to use a language and dialogue that is relevant to the audience. Communicators can only be sure their messages will be understood if they understand their audience, including their values, fears, hopes, and how they best give and receive information.<sup>37</sup> For that reason, a trusted neighbour and respected farmer, or a friendly classmate or child sharing a story with parents are more likely to be effective communicators than outside experts.

Embracing a combination of strategies and tools widens the reach of CBA communication. A respected farmer sharing his story allows the audience to imagine how this story relates to their own story, and resonates with their own aspirations and desires. Taking this a step further and providing space for social learning, such as small group discussions, creates a trusting environment where the audience can hear, see and inquire of others who are making successful CBA changes. This builds the familiarity and efficacy of the audience to make changes themselves.

Of course, children have different cognitive processes to adults, and building the capacity of children to communicate complex issues in a format that is appealing and appropriate, such as song, drama, dance, art and drawing, is crucial. Linking school-based communication into the household by encouraging children to speak to their parents, contributes to a community construct around CBA.

Utilising mass media communication can take CBA to another level by helping disseminate stories from any one community to many. However, taking these stories and communications to policy-makers may require a more formal evidence-based approach. Yet empowering children and their communities with the skills and confidence to communicate with decision-makers about their adaptation needs is important as it not only

builds their knowledge capital but also strengthens the ties between these two distinctive stakeholder groups.

Vertical and horizontal pathways for communications can take many forms. On one hand, we have children as the holders of knowledge who are sharing climate change information with other children in their communities. This is horizontal communication. These children may then go on to communicate this way in their future workplaces or universities as adults. On the other hand, changes in thinking in local government can lead to a more responsive and adaptive approach in their vertical communication of CBA to communities. In both cases building the adaptive capacity of boys, girls, youth, parents or local government officials can lead to a range of effective communications that are carried out at multiple scales and across multiple forums.

### Key lessons

- Targeted communities and children should be given the skills to share their knowledge with non-beneficiaries through the establishment and attendance of knowledge-sharing forums, including technical training on the use of communication technologies.
- Providing avenues for children and national government bodies to engage and discuss practical solutions to climate change adaptation may seem time consuming and challenging but in practice can play a fundamental role to the success of CBA project outcomes. Engaging with relevant government counterparts at all levels, and explicitly including key moments and mechanisms for this engagement in project design and implementation, will maximise opportunities for learning and replicating project successes, and should always be integrated across the project design.
- Effective climate change communication ultimately relies on the skills and knowledge of the facilitators who are on the ground, working with communities. Therefore, along with training and coaching activities for facilitators, multiple tools should be used to ensure the quality of communication activities. Our experiences indicate that child-led small group communication appears to be the best approach for children to actively facilitate climate change communication.

## Case study Vietnam

### Knowledge and actions: Sharing locally relevant CBA techniques with community members

The impacts of climate change are often locally specific and the tools, mechanisms and capacity to adapt are locally defined.<sup>38</sup> Pilot CBA projects have floundered in the past when they have lacked the capacity, resources, relevant institutions or innovations to carry forward the lessons learned at a larger scale. While the literature has often focused on big-scale projects that require substantial increase in commitments from relevant political entities, organisations and budgets,<sup>39</sup> Mr Vo Dinh Trung from Quang Nam province demonstrates that scaling-up can also take place in a more informal and smaller fashion with great net results and benefits for the entire community.

Vo Dinh Trung lives with his wife, Cao Thi Phung, and children. Earning an income for the family has been a constant challenge, particularly with injuries that Trung sustained during the Vietnam War. Further exacerbating these challenges are limited livelihood options that have hindered Trung and his fellow community members from adopting a more diverse set of income streams.

Quang Nam province is also almost entirely reliant on the agricultural sector, which in recent years has been impacted by a longer and dryer hot season and increased rainfall during the wet season. These impacts have not only affected crop yields but animal health has also been impacted by the extreme oscillations in temperatures across the two distinctive seasons.

During a village meeting, Trung and Phung were introduced to two livelihood models that were designed



to help farmers adapt to climate change impacts: the bio-safety chicken livelihood model (BCLM) and the peanut model. Save the Children, in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Agricultural Extension Centre, provided the necessary technical support to farmers interested in applying one of the models.

Trung and his family were successful in their application for the BCLM and were initially delivered 50 chicks and provided with two technical training sessions. The training taught the family how to properly care for and feed the chickens, manage disease and build appropriate and adaptable cages. With harsher and more erratic environmental conditions the technical sessions provided tips to ensure the chicks would not be as vulnerable to extreme heat and cold. All families that participated in these models were provided with 50 percent of the start-up materials and were asked to contribute the rest from their own funds.

As a result of the training, Trung's chickens grew to a healthy weight and there were no disease outbreaks. After just four months Trung was able to sell 41 chickens for 2,401,000 VND (AUD\$146) – making his family a healthy profit. He bred another 55 chickens, too.

The project has also fostered sharing and exchange. Trung has shared his experience in raising chickens with other community members who did not take part in the project. Similarly, he was able to borrow peanut seeds from his neighbour and learn from them the practices that would best support optimal growth of the plants. His neighbour also further emphasised the importance of understanding climate change and how this impacts their community.

Other households across the commune have now realised the advantage of having a range of incomes that are more adapted to local climate trends. Twenty families have informally taken up the chicken model and a further 18 have taken on the peanut model. An additional 38 families were able to learn from their neighbours and used their own resources to implement the successful models. The process of learning as a community has helped the families become more confident, particularly as their crop yields and chickens have brought results. An increase in their income has also helped families explore other livelihood options.

Through the implementation of locally relevant livelihood models that are better suited to sub-tropical climates, families across the community now have a deeper understanding and appreciation of climate change impacts, and have developed practical skills to help them make positive changes to support their livelihoods. Overall, communities have increased flexibility with planning and are more forward thinking in their approach to livelihoods. They are also utilising climate change information to support their decision-making.

<sup>36</sup>Berkes et al. (2001) in Pomeroy and Neil (2011) Small scale fisheries management: Frameworks and approaches for the developing world.

<sup>37</sup>Nerlich, B and Koteyko, N (2010) Institute for Science and Society, in Brown, B (2009) Theory and language of climate change communication. Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change

<sup>38</sup>CDKN working paper (2014) How to scale out community-based adaptation to climate change. Accessed April 2015: <https://static.weadapt.org/knowledge-base/files/1432/537a026110d95cdkn-working-paper-community-adaption-final-web-res.pdf>

<sup>39</sup>Gillespie, S (2004) 'Scaling up community-driven development: A synthesis of experience', FCND Discussion Paper 181. Washington, DC: Food Consumption and Nutrition Division, International Food Policy Research Institute

## Case study Philippines

### Self-Learning Kits: Pioneering the integration of climate change adaptation in the education curriculum

School-based education on climate change is an important component of the CBA project. It provides the basis from which many of the other activities and outcomes of the project flow. Once children understand the causes and impacts of climate change, they are better able to see how they might adapt to the specific effects felt in their community, as well as how to communicate and advocate for action to their peers, parents and community. Working with the relevant education departments provides an opportunity to maximise the benefits of the project to reach many more children.

The Philippine education system, including the curriculum used in schools, is managed and regulated by the Department of Education (DepEd). The Department is organised into the central (national level) and field (regional and local) offices. To meet the educational needs of the country, the DepEd and the education system have undergone several stages of development. In 2011, the country began a transition from the old 10-year basic education system to the new K-12 education system. Elementary education became compulsory, along with the adoption of a new curriculum for schools.

Congruent with this transition was the enactment of national and administrative laws mandating the inclusion of discussions on environmental protection, disaster risk reduction and climate change as part of basic education. To make these laws effective, the central office distributed teaching modules to strengthen teachers' understanding of climate issues, as well as their capacity to deliver such information.

In early 2013, the project in Eastern Visayas saw this new curriculum as an opportunity to build on the existing partnership with the local DepEd to develop Self-Learning Kits (SLKs) on climate change for Science and Social Sciences. SLKs are sets of learner-centred supplement educational material on climate change adaptation. They were designed for students in grades 5–9 and implemented in 27 pilot schools across the provinces of East Samar, North Samar and Southern Leyte. It was initially agreed the SLKs would be used as a lesson module by students in times of emergency and disaster situations, and when classrooms were being used as evacuation centres.

The impact of Typhoon Haiyan in late 2013 brought further changes to the DepEd's perspective on mainstreaming climate change education through SLKs in Eastern Visayas. Rather than just using SLKs during emergency schooling, they were refined to suit the local context and become a component of regular lessons. SLKs were developed for six more subjects and expanded to include grades 3 and 4. These SLKs were expected to reach

more than 400,000 students from grades 3–9 starting in 2015. To realise this reach, 74 teachers were selected throughout the region to put SLKs into writing, while eight reviewers and six illustrators from the regional office were involved in the process.

The project provided the training and the venue for the DepEd to work with other relevant agencies in putting together the SLKs. Developing the SLKs provided the opportunity for the regional DepEd and the project to work on a holistic approach for inclusive and effective knowledge-sharing. Introducing climate change concepts to other curriculum content, like trigonometric problems, language, poetry, music and arts, can provide a stronger foundation for children when it comes to understanding and adapting to climate change.

Dr Harvey Villamor, Regional Education Program Supervisor for Science and SLK-Science Editor said the kits made teaching and learning about climate change easy.

“They were tailored to be appreciated by every student and teachers, thus they will not be like other modules that simply gather dust on the shelves,” said Dr Villamor.

Another SLK reviewer, Dr Alejandrito Yman, believes that while Eastern Visayas has been used to typhoons and tropical cyclones, the experience of Typhoon Haiyan proved it is high time for climate change concepts to be integrated into basic education.

“The SLKs made teaching and learning about climate change easy. Now, educating about climate change is more than just an administrative mandate,” said Dr Yman.

The biggest challenge was integrating climate change concepts into non-science courses like English and Filipino. These challenges were addressed through further research, technical assistance and content editing provided by the Philippine Climate Change Commission and the project.

“The bigger impact was imprinted heavily on the partnership between [the project], DepEd and other government agencies,” said Dr Yman.

“With this experience together ... we may be able to replicate this to other regions in the Philippines. Through working together, there is nothing that we cannot do to respond to climate change.”



## Case study Vietnam

### Climate change adaptation in Quang Ngai: A project management model

The CBA project in Vietnam involves many different players. The local communities are the ultimate beneficiaries but in order to deliver the project many other actors must also participate in project activities. This is true for a development project in any sector, but particularly so for climate change adaptation, which affects many different aspects of life and which requires interactions with government agencies responsible for education, disaster management, agriculture and environment.

Finding the right model to engage all these stakeholders, particularly at government level, can take time but Lê Viết Bình, Specialist at the Disaster Management Centre and Secretary of the Project Management Board (PMB) for the CBA project in Quang Ngai, feels the model they are using is ideal for their province.

Bình has been involved in several other disaster risk management and climate change adaptation projects in Quang Ngai. His experience is that these projects often have PMBs established at the commune level, rather than at the provincial level. While a commune level PMB could be effective in implementing the project directly in the project area, the replication throughout the province and the participation of relevant district or provincial officials was limited at best, and sometimes non-existent. Having a provincial level PMB has allowed the project to reach a wider audience, and offers much greater potential for replication and uptake by others.

Quang Ngai's PMB for climate change adaptation was established in 2013 by the provincial People's Committee with the following participating departments: the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Department of Education and Training, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and the Provincial Committees for Flood and Storm Control and Search and Rescue. Including all of the relevant government departments at district and provincial levels was critical. Indeed, Bình notes that if PMBs do not include the authorised agencies in their respective fields, project implementation is very difficult.

“A good project management board is a board with the participation of the different departments. Especially the head has to be reliable, capable and very committed. The leading department should be a functional government's department. In this case it was the Provincial Committees for Flood and Storm Control and Search and Rescue,” said Bình.

During the project there were difficulties and challenges. In order to solve these, the PMB members held meetings to evaluate the project results, and come up with solutions.



“During the project implementation, it was necessary to have consistent coordination and messages from the province to commune level, and the consensus of the communities,” said Bình.

Biannually, there was a meeting between the project and the PMB to make plans for the coming six months. The respective technical teams actively managed their fieldwork in collaboration with their line agencies and officials. For example, disaster risk reduction activities were assigned to the Committee for Flood and Storm Control, while school-based climate change education and training activities were assigned to the Department of Education and Training. This allowed the PMB members to be proactive in implementation and achieve good results.

“Without [the project's] technical assistance, I wouldn't have had knowledge and skills to organise trainings for the community, especially the training of CVCA,” said Bình. “We have accumulated technical knowledge and facilitation skills in delivering trainings thanks to the project, too.”

“If there are more projects like this, we will choose to establish such a model of management, because it has shown the superiority in coordination and implementation ... climate change adaptation projects cannot succeed without coordination between departments, sectors and locals.”

“Climate change adaptation projects cannot succeed without coordination between departments, sectors and locals.”

## Case study Philippines

### Sowing the seeds for child-led action on climate change adaptation

Research has shown that education can offer a valuable space for children to feel safe and take part in physical, cognitive and social activities. Education also provides a valuable entry point for the Save the Children's CBA project as it mobilises children and gives them the relevant knowledge and skills they require to best adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Santino lives in Laoag City in the Philippines. He is a dynamic student leader and the Chairperson of his school-based CBA group. He actively leads the group in the design and implementation of innovative climate change action plans, both within his high school and across the community.

One of many student volunteers who take part in the CC-CBA Advocacy Youth Camp, Santino has been trained to facilitate discussions and knowledge on children's rights and climate change for children from minority groups. The training has also enabled Santino to conduct peer-to-peer sessions with elementary students and become a featured broadcaster on the local *Boses Ng Kabataan* radio show.

Communicating knowledge and ensuring children and communities are empowered to lead and influence community-based climate change initiatives play a central role in the CBA project. It is often paradoxical that while climate change disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable, their voices and indigenous knowledge rarely feature in international frameworks and mechanisms that target climate change. The close connection between livelihoods, environment and social systems has meant many vulnerable communities have a long history of adapting to environmental change, and are now using this existing knowledge to begin adapting to climate change.

Santino planting a tree as part of a CBA activity in his community. Photo: Save the Children



The Dumagat tribe is an example of this lapse in connecting science with local knowledge. This indigenous community, based in the Aurora province of the Philippines, was included in the project to provide the tribes' children with a forum for learning, sharing and discussing climate change causes, impacts and locally relevant adaptation activities. The forum was led by Santino's CBA group. This process of sharing and educating was a mutually beneficial process for Santino's group and the Dumagat children. While Santino was able to share his climate change knowledge, his group learnt from the Dumagat children's observations and their current responses to their changing environment.

This process of empowering children to lead and influence CBA initiatives did not go unnoticed by the tribe's Chief. He, too, greatly benefited from these learnings and noticed a shift in the Dumagat children's confidence and behaviour. The children that had participated in Santino's group discussions became more vocal, and were actively asking more questions to better their understanding of climate change.

When asked his thoughts on his work with the Dumagat community, Santino said: "We have support from our teachers, classmates, parents and from project staff. There is the willingness of our team to share our learnings and knowledge with other children, and of course the interest and enthusiasm of the community to learn new things."

Communicating climate change can take many forms and the outlets for this information are varied. While Santino is no longer a student in the high school, he still uses all of the skills taught to him under this project and often takes the opportunity to discuss climate change impacts with his new peers as he studies for a Bachelor of Secondary Education. He has also engaged with the student-run Garbage Management Group, which regularly cleans up local coastlines and streets.

When young children are able to carry forward their learnings throughout their school years and beyond, they can act as important catalysts for change. Knowledge travels with them and the tools that empowered them to speak out continues to guide them.

Santino with members of the Dumagat community. Photo: Save the Children



Trung and his wife caring for their chickens. Photo: Save the Children

# LESSONS LEARNED

## A consortium approach

Climate change presents a number of profound, complex and interconnected economic, ecological, ethical and scientific challenges. Working collaboratively, and drawing out information from a number of sources to address the single problem of climate change is an important part of finding the solution.

Resolving the multi-pronged issues of a changing climate will challenge how we think, what we do, where we are going and how we arrive there. Bringing people together to build a common vision calls for a way of decision-making that is inclusive, participatory, transformative and, ultimately, better.

A multi-stakeholder approach enables space for the voices of all of those impacted by climate change to be heard, moving beyond governments to civil society, communities and, most importantly, the most vulnerable. The process takes the view that everyone involved has a valid perspective, relevant knowledge and experience to bring to the decision-making table. The approach aims to create trust between the actors and those who are impacted, with solutions that provide mutual benefits. The approach is people-centred and everyone involved takes responsibility for the outcome. Because of the inclusive and participatory approaches used, stakeholders have a greater sense of ownership over decisions and are more likely to comply with them.<sup>40</sup>

A consortium is a fitting arrangement to facilitate such a process as it enables one or more agencies to come together to share resources and work towards a common set of objectives. In 2012, Plan International and Save the Children were uniquely positioned. Both agencies were working on child rights in the Asia-Pacific region and had a vision to develop a child-centred participatory program to respond to the challenges of climate change across the Philippines and Vietnam. That, coupled with an increasingly competitive funding environment, galvanised the agencies into partnership.

In the arrangement, the lead agency was accountable to the donor, and responsible for reporting, communication and coordination. However all decision-making was done by consensus. Adding to the mix, each project area had a unique stakeholder profile. The members collaborated at the outset to develop a common program design, detailed objectives and program logic.

To continue to align approaches and ensure quality programming, it was critical to employ adaptive and inclusive management at all levels. Success was also attributed to the willingness of the members and stakeholders to collaborate, and their ability to build working relationships.

Working as a consortium enabled the agencies to pool their resources, broaden their reach, and spread across a range of geographic and socio-economic contexts – reaching those children and communities that are the most vulnerable to climate change. This was enhanced by the establishment

of partnerships with local stakeholders, which enabled the consortium members to build on existing relationships and gain the trust of the communities.

Fostering a learning approach that was both reflective and transformative was fundamental to improving program learning, quality and outcomes. This iterative process required a level of trust and openness among all stakeholders, as solutions were dependent on the ability to cast a critical eye across all of the approaches.

The very nature of CBA is grounded in participatory methodologies that harness “existing cultural norms while addressing local development issues that contribute to climate vulnerability.”<sup>41</sup> These methodologies were reflected in the consortium approach and have meant that communities and stakeholders were continuously learning by doing. It is this process that fundamentally contributed to building people’s adaptive capacity now, and into the future.

## The evidence for using child-centred approaches

It is important to recognise that a child-centred approach doesn’t mean that children take responsibility for all adaptation efforts. Putting children at the centre is about ensuring children’s rights and roles are considered at every stage of action, but not that they have to be intimately and actively involved at every stage. There are many forums and decisions that would be inappropriate to involve a child or a teenager in, and many responsibilities that it would be unfair to burden them with.

In Vietnam, Save the Children is the lead agency and Plan International the sub grantee. In the Philippines, these roles are reversed. Each agency collaborates with their in-country counterparts to design and implement the program across their project locations. This means that in each country, there are multiple partners working together and collaborating on the project.



The presentation of Self-Learning Kits in the Philippines by the Department of Education and officials with Plan International. Photo: Plan International

However, children’s right to participate, to have a voice, and to be considered in decision-making are clearly outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Furthermore, from our experiences in implementing CC-CBA, Plan International and Save the Children have seen the benefits of including children in CBA.

First among these lessons is that children can be excellent and creative communicators. All projects aim to increase their impact beyond direct beneficiaries. For example, investing in training of trainers to consciously enable an increase in reach is common development practice. Empowering children with communication skills and confidence, as well as knowledge on climate change, allows this knowledge to permeate further into the community and to reach those who may be overlooked by other interventions. The process also builds young people’s capacity to communicate on any issue that is important to them, increasing their ability to participate actively in their communities.

Climate change is a problem that will increasingly be felt in the future. Preparing children for those impacts now provides a firmer starting block from which they can continue to improve their knowledge and capacities as they develop, and as those impacts are realised. Children are also able to approach ideas in different ways to adults. They have different perspectives, and can sometimes offer solutions or suggestions that adults would not have thought of. Openness to all forms of creativity is a real asset if we are to continue to innovate and adapt to the challenges that climate change poses.

A child-centred approach is not without its challenges. Cultural norms in many countries dictate that older adults are the most knowledgeable, and the younger you are the less you know. In this case, listening to children can be a difficult concept to take on. However, building the capacity of children and improving their education and understanding on climate change is not usually difficult to advocate for. Once this point has been reached, more subtle or indirect means of listening to children can be effective. For example, using drama, songs or theatre productions – which are commonly performed in school – to convey messages about climate change can be far more appropriate and effective than children seemingly telling their parents and teachers what to do.

Taking a holistic approach to CBA also means that messages are continually being reinforced. For example, the knowledge and understanding of adult community members on climate change is built through awareness-raising activities, and their skills and experiences are built through the implementation of livelihood models. These practices are then reinforced in their discussions with their children. Similarly, children learn about climate change at school and implement school-based adaptation initiatives. They are then able to see other examples of adaptation initiatives in their homes and communities, strengthening their ability to apply their own knowledge and ensuring their resilience is increased. They share their knowledge with their parents too, further reinforcing the holistic approach.

<sup>40</sup>UNFCCC (2012) Multi Stakeholder Processes. Accessed 9 April 2015: [http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/methodologies\\_for/vulnerability\\_and\\_adaptation/application/pdf/multistakeholder\\_processes.pdf](http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/methodologies_for/vulnerability_and_adaptation/application/pdf/multistakeholder_processes.pdf)

<sup>41</sup>Ayers, J and Huq, S (2009) Community-based adaptation to climate change: An update. IIED Briefing. IIED, London

<sup>42</sup>Moser, S C (2010). Communicating climate change: History, challenges, process and future directions. WIREs Climate Change: Volume 1, January/February 2010. John Wiley and Sons, Ltd. Accessed April 2015: [http://www.climateaccess.org/sites/default/files/Moser\\_Communicating%20Climate%20Change.pdf](http://www.climateaccess.org/sites/default/files/Moser_Communicating%20Climate%20Change.pdf)

<sup>43</sup>Child centred climate change adaptation project in Asia and the Pacific, Act to Adapt. Accessed April 2015: <https://weadapt.org/knowledge-base/community-based-adaptation/act-to-adapt>

## The challenges of communicating climate change

Climate change as a subject area offers some very particular challenges to implementing successful development projects. It's a complex topic, with multiple causes and varied impacts, which is universally acknowledged to be challenging to communicate.<sup>42</sup>

Building people's understanding of climate change is often best done by basing it on a community's own experience and their understanding of other topics.<sup>43</sup> As such, climate change is often taught either through the lens of disasters, or from a more general environmental change perspective. There are drawbacks to both approaches. An incomplete understanding of climate change can lead communities to look only at immediate disaster-preparedness activities, ignoring the serious slower onset threats like prolonged dry seasons. It's also common to advocate for activities that are good for the environment but that won't actually help reduce greenhouse gas emissions or the impacts of climate change.

The specific options to adapt to climate change vary wildly, depending on the particular threats a community faces, their context and their capacities. The list of what might be appropriate adaptation options can therefore be very long, making it difficult to conceptualise or easily convey. The fact that many of the specific interventions are often actions that could equally be implemented under the guise of a sustainable development project, a livelihoods project, a disaster preparedness project, a water, sanitation and health project or even an education project, can also make it difficult to communicate why additional and dedicated education around climate change is necessary.

Communication on climate change needs to be tailored for the specific audience, based on people's existing knowledge and level of understanding. This is particularly important when working with children and youth. An appropriate discussion point for the Philippines Climate Change Commission will not be appropriate for a grade 7 curriculum, for example. There are often low literacy rates in rural areas, and several of the ethnic minority groups who participate in the project have no written language. Materials to build community understanding can therefore not rely on written messaging, and they need to be adapted for the particular group at hand. Tailoring messages about climate change to the specific context involves much more than just adjusting the specific impacts that will be felt in that geographic area.

The impacts of climate change that are felt today will not remain constant. As the levels of global emissions continue to rise, and the historical emissions continue to be felt, impacts will worsen and change. Successful CBA initiatives cannot only focus on the particular interventions determined at a specific moment in time. Rather, communities need to be empowered with flexible and forward-looking decision-making skills, so they can continue to adapt. Taking a participatory approach to CBA that builds the skills of children and communities to analyse their own vulnerability and capacities, and strengthen their leadership skills through the implementation of their own priorities and projects, is an important aspect in this regard. This is vital for ensuring the sustainability of any CBA project.

A secondary school student from the Thang Binh district in Vietnam attends a school-based climate change activity.  
Photo: Save the Children



**HEALTH**  
Corner



PLS. SAVE!!!  
Thank You

**DAILY SWEEPERS**

May 26, 2015	May 27	May 28	May 29, 2015
Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	All Groups
	Nicole	Jasmine - Leader	to be assigned
	Ren Kimberly	Doloresa	
	Abigail	Dimple	
	Kromie - Leader	Kia	
	Angelina	Lori Nise	
	Sullivan	Wena Ma	
	Priscela		

**Mga Epekto ng Pagbabago ng Klima**

**Sanhi ng Pagbabago ng Klima**

Marinel, 17, has learnt about climate change through the CBA program in Eastern Samar. She is now taking an active role and teaching other fellow students about climate change. Photo. Plan International



**Save the Children**



**Plan**