

Struggling to mainstream climate issues?

Lessons learnt from CDKN's knowledge brokering experience



Climate & Development
Knowledge Network

Challenge 5

Limited capacities and
resource allocation
prevent climate
change integration and
implementation



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About the contributors

This document was written by Lucia Scodanibbio, CDKN Learning and Knowledge Brokering Lead. The experiences summarised in this series refer to the collective work of a much larger team of CDKN colleagues and partners, who generously shared their knowledge brokering lessons and approaches to mainstreaming climate change issues through interviews and joint learning sessions. Thanks to the following colleagues for their contributions and insights: Arsema Andargatchew and Robi Redda (Ethiopia); Chris Gordon, Prince Ansah and Amanda April (Ghana); Edna Odhiambo (Kenya); Margaret Angula and Cecil Togarepi (Namibia); Revocatus Twinomuhangi (Uganda); Claudia Martinez and Patricia Velasquez (Colombia); Gabriela Villamarín (Ecuador and Latin America); María José Pacha (Latin America); Sandra Isola and Jessica Huertas (Peru); Nivedita Mani (India); Kamal Devkota, Kaustuv Neupane and Geeta Sandal (Nepal); Bedoshruti Sadhukhan (South Asia); Lisa McNamara (Global).

Extensive review comments were provided by Lisa McNamara, CDKN Programme Lead, Georgina Cundill, IDRC Senior Programme Specialist and Shehnaaz Moosa, CDKN Director. Thanks also to Emma Baker, Rebecca Cullis, Zahrah Cassiem and Robin Heuermann for production assistance.

Correspondence about this document: cdkn@southsouthnorth.org

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Cover Image: A water trough in Garissa County. *ADA Consortium*

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Pedestrian traffic in Nairobi, analysed as part of non-motorised transport study. CDKN and Tribesman Pictures

Introduction



Background

Since 2010, the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) has supported decision-makers in designing and delivering climate-resilient development in focal countries in Africa, Latin America and South Asia through a combination of knowledge, research and advisory support. Our approach has been to facilitate locally owned and led processes, working in partnership with governmental and non-governmental actors at multiple scales.

Through this work we have become aware of the important, often invisible, role that ‘intermediaries’ or ‘brokers’ play in linking knowledge producers with knowledge users, and in managing complex processes for effective decisions and actions on climate change. In 2018, we shifted our attention to focus on knowledge brokering to help accelerate and amplify climate action. We work closely with stakeholders to promote evidence-based decision-making by fostering learning, collaboration and leadership through capacity strengthening and integrating diverse types of knowledge.

Along the way, CDKN has sought to document our learning and that of our partners to better understand how knowledge and evidence of climate change can inform and translate into policy and action. This reflection process has investigated different tools and approaches for enhancing the use of knowledge in decision-making, the barriers encountered in facilitating change, and the lessons that may be useful for others who are navigating similar challenges.

The lessons showcased in this document initially emerged during a series of learning exchanges that brought together CDKN’s partners in Asia and Africa to discuss the ways in which they had sought to mainstream climate issues in decision-making processes. They identified core challenges that they had come across during these processes and brainstormed different solutions and approaches to overcome them. A series of detailed interviews with CDKN’s different focal country partners followed, to identify, document and share some of the strategies and approaches they had used.

As a result of this learning work, we identified seven **challenges** to mainstreaming climate issues across governance scales and sectors, including with national to local government decision-makers and community members on the ground. These seven challenges have been used to structure this series. Each challenge has a number of **pathways** and **case studies** that demonstrate the knowledge brokering approaches that were used, as well as **key takeaways** that exemplify the main lessons learned in each of the case studies. This series is not intended as a definitive guide about climate mainstreaming, but we hope that others may gain some tips about knowledge brokering approaches and tools that could help as they seek to integrate knowledge about climate issues into their own contexts.

SPECIFICALLY, IT IS HOPED THAT THE LESSONS PRESENTED HERE CAN:



Influence researchers and decision-makers about the importance of knowledge brokering



Enable learning exchanges with other knowledge brokers in the global South



Encourage donors to think differently about the design of future programmes, to ensure sufficient time for impact and openness to being adaptive as new demands emerge

What is knowledge brokering and who are knowledge brokers?

Knowledge brokering is the process of moving knowledge into action. Knowledge brokers link producers of knowledge and users of knowledge to facilitate the generation, dissemination and eventual use of that knowledge.¹ The range of activities they are involved in can be understood along a spectrum that goes from working with information flows to seeking to bring about systemic change (see figure below). Whilst knowledge brokers have often focused on making knowledge more relevant and accessible (the left-hand side of the spectrum), the scale and urgency of the climate crisis today calls for knowledge brokering practice to move towards innovation brokering (on the right side of the spectrum).²

INFORMATIONAL RELATIONAL SYSTEMS

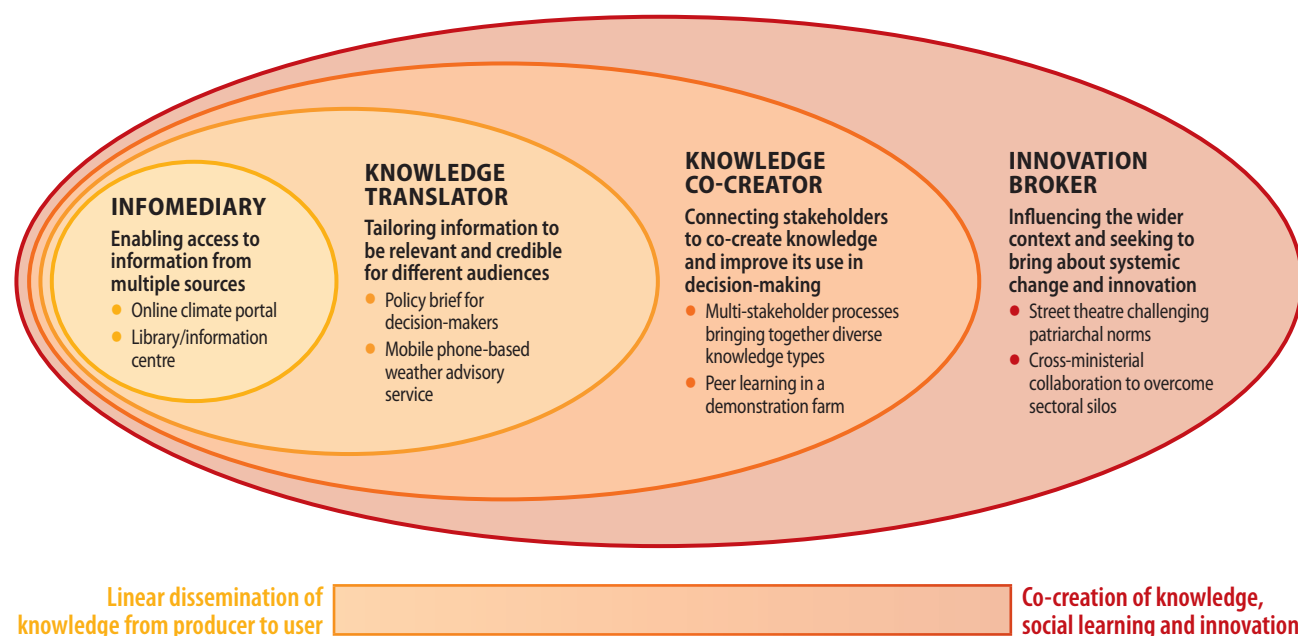


FIGURE 1 Spectrum of knowledge broker roles, adapted from Harvey et al. (2012)³ and Shaxson et al. (2012).⁴

This series is structured as follows:



CHALLENGE 1 Key stakeholders lack sufficient information about the significance and urgency of climate change.

To respond, knowledge brokers need to build a critical mass of tailored and accessible knowledge, highlighting the extent of climate change impacts on different sectors or groups. Knowledge, however, is not sufficient by itself, and needs to be combined with a range of engagement strategies, including to collaboratively develop responses to the challenges being faced.

CHALLENGE 2 Climate change is not sufficiently high on political agendas or part of institutional mandates.

To respond, knowledge brokers need to invest time and effort in understanding the governance landscape. They also need to be creative at finding different ways of aligning their messages with government policies, visions and mandates.

CHALLENGE 3 Climate change issues are mostly considered environmental ministries' responsibility and collaboration across sectors is rarely seen.

To respond, knowledge brokers can assist by creating or building on existing platforms for different stakeholders to discuss climate issues and strengthen relationships.

CHALLENGE 4 Subnational governments lack guidance and support to implement climate change related legislation and policy set at national levels.

To respond, knowledge brokers can provide support through existing vertical government and governance structures; they can mainstream climate issues into other related, better-decentralised sectors; or they can collaborate with strategic institutions to advance the climate mainstreaming process.

CHALLENGE 5 Limited capacities and resource allocation prevent climate change integration and implementation.

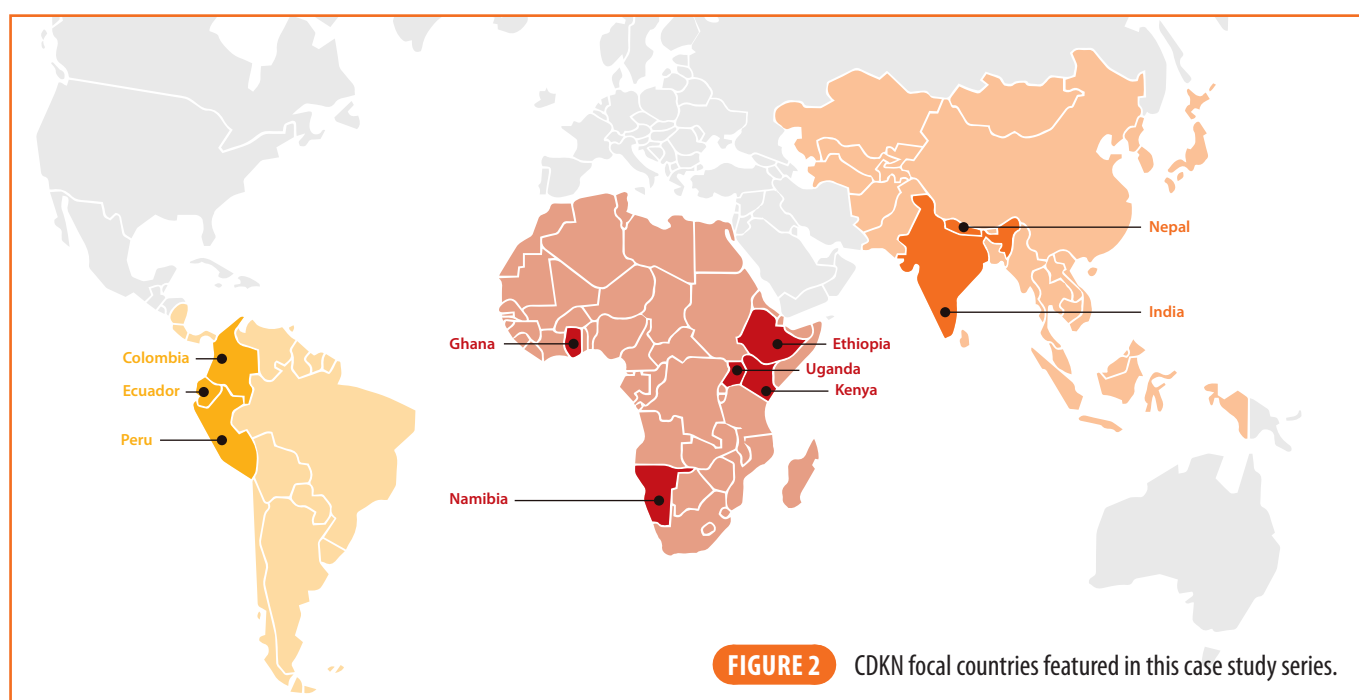
To respond, knowledge brokers need to think carefully about the medium of knowledge transfer beyond outputs. They can do this by co-organising training and engagement activities jointly with stakeholders and promoting learning and understanding about climate resilience from on-the-ground experience.

CHALLENGE 6 Gatekeeping and bureaucracy can act as bottlenecks and delay progress on projects.

To respond, knowledge brokers need to know their context well, using multiple tactics while maintaining flexibility. They also need to work both with government actors with continuity in the system and in partnership with other key actors to overcome challenges.

CHALLENGE 7 Local communities lack sufficient support to integrate climate issues into their actions.

To respond, knowledge brokers can assist by connecting local groups to different sources of knowledge and to intermediaries that can enhance access to specific resources.



Challenge 5:

Limited capacities and resource allocation prevent climate change integration and implementation



CASE STUDIES

PATHWAY A

Co-organise training and engagement activities with key strategic partners



GHANA

Advancing climate-smart knowledge, capacities and action through local partnerships in **Ghana**



INDIA

Tackling peri-urban capacity and governance gaps in **India** via bottom-up and top-down strategies



ECUADOR

Strengthening capacities to integrate a gender-responsive approach into climate change management in **Ecuador**

PATHWAY B

Move beyond written outputs by promoting peer exchange and experiential learning



NEPAL

Piloting proposed solutions and integrating diverse types of knowledge to enhance climate-resilient water management in **Nepal**



NEPAL

Demonstrating climate-smart agriculture technologies in **Nepal** to complement training and knowledge sharing



REGIONAL

Strengthening gender mainstreaming and adaptation planning in **Latin America** through peer dialogue

PATHWAY C

Strengthen capacities to access climate finance



COLOMBIA

Supporting **Colombian** stakeholders to access climate finance



ECUADOR

Partnering to train **Ecuadorian** municipalities on climate finance issues



CHALLENGE

5

A borehole in a strategic grazing reserve, Isiolo County. ADA Consortium

Limited capacities and resource allocation prevent climate change integration and implementation

While awareness of climate issues and the urgency to address them is growing, many government officials remain uncertain about how to effectively integrate these concerns into planning and development processes. Climate-specific technical capacities are often limited, with insufficient personnel dedicated to the topic and a lack of clarity around viable strategies. Although national-level capacity tends to be stronger, the need for action is most pressing at the local level, where skills gaps are more prevalent. Furthermore, subnational actors often lack knowledge about how to access funding beyond national channels. Strengthening capacities therefore remains a crucial aspect of addressing the climate challenge. Knowledge brokers need to adopt creative approaches – such as experiential, practice-based or peer learning – to strengthen these capacities. Concrete, successful examples from the field often resonate more than theoretical concepts, especially with practitioners and busy government officials. Co-organising training activities can help raise awareness, foster ownership and build momentum for climate-responsive planning.



CASE STUDIES

KEY TAKEAWAYS



GHANA

Advancing climate-smart knowledge, capacities and action through local partnerships in **Ghana**

- 1 Establishing partnerships between the Digital Tools for Agriculture and Livelihoods project and various government and non-government actors enabled the integration of project activities into existing initiatives and systems. This collaborative approach enhanced the sustainability and resilience of the interventions.
- 2 Collaborating with strategic partners strengthened capacities and raised awareness on climate-related concerns, it ensured ongoing relevance of project topics (through strong feedback mechanisms with the public) and enhanced ownership of the initiatives.



INDIA

Tackling peri-urban capacity and governance gaps in **India** via bottom-up and top-down strategies

- 1 Consulting with key government and academic stakeholders, alongside desk-based research, helped the Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group identify priority knowledge and capacity gaps related to peri-urban issues.
- 2 Documenting field experiences with farmer and women's groups generated a critical mass of knowledge on the value of peri-urban ecosystems and climate-smart agricultural practices, which was then consolidated into a compendium and toolkit.
- 3 Co-developing the toolkit with government partners and the School of Planning and Architecture helped integrate the training material into their broader programmes, enhancing its uptake and sustained use.
- 4 Demonstrating practical experiences of micro-resilience planning from field interventions enables rapid uptake by others, as the knowledge is directly applicable, relevant and easy to replicate.



ECUADOR

Strengthening capacities to integrate a gender-responsive approach into climate change management in **Ecuador**

- 1 **Developing training material** in response to stakeholder requests, and in close collaboration with key partners, can enhance their relevance, encourage broader dissemination and support long-term use. Ecuador's gender and climate change toolkit strengthened capacities to integrate gender perspectives into climate initiatives through technical content, curated reading resources and a tailored game.

PATHWAY A

Co-organise training and engagement activities with key strategic partners

Co-organise training and engagement activities with key strategic partners

Strategic partnerships between knowledge brokers and governmental or non-governmental actors are essential for ensuring that initiatives are tailored to their context, aligned with ongoing efforts, and sustainable beyond project funding. Collaborating on specific capacity strengthening activities can play a vital role in developing training materials and toolkits that are co-owned – enhancing their relevance and increasing the likelihood of continued use beyond the lifespan of specific projects. The collaborative process of designing and delivering training programmes can also strengthen partners' capacities on key climate-related issues, and foster greater awareness and engagement. Such partnerships can extend the longevity, reach and impact of training efforts, as stakeholders integrate the materials into their own practices and disseminate them through their networks.



Woman farmers in peri-urban agriculture field in Gorakhpur.



GHANA



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1** Establishing partnerships between the Digital Tools for Agriculture and Livelihoods project and various government and non-government actors enabled the integration of project activities into existing initiatives and systems. This collaborative approach enhanced the sustainability and resilience of the interventions.
- 2** Collaborating with strategic partners strengthened capacities and raised awareness on climate-related concerns, it ensured ongoing relevance of project topics (through strong feedback mechanisms with the public) and enhanced ownership of the initiatives.

[View more Ghana case studies in Challenge 7](#)

CASE STUDY

Advancing climate-smart knowledge, capacities and action through local partnerships in Ghana

In Ghana's Upper West region, climate change is contributing to increasingly erratic rainfall patterns and prolonged dry seasons. These shifts disrupt planting schedules, threatening food security and the ability to sustain profitable and resilient livelihoods. To support better decision-making around on-farm diversification, adaptation and livelihood options, farmers need timely and reliable access to agricultural and climate-related information. However, the area suffers from limited local capacities and resources, evidenced by a low ratio of extension officers to farmers.

The Digital Tools for Agriculture and Livelihoods (DigiTAL) project set up several strategic partnerships to increase access to climate-smart information for smallholder farmers, knowledge providers and local leaders through a range of innovative means and outreach tools. The overall objective was to strengthen livelihoods and resilience. Working partnerships were established with the Department of Agriculture (DOA) to host two of the four **climate advisory resource centres** (CARCs) that act as digital libraries for farmers and extension officers to learn more about sustainable agricultural practices and water management. The DOA also helped to source training material (e.g. videos produced by the national-level Ministry of Agriculture) and provided resource personnel to run the centres. The CARCs have now been integrated into DOA's operations, serving as centres for training agricultural officers and supporting various municipal assembly activities by making use of their technologies, devices and video resources across a range of undertakings.

During the project, a DOA official was trained to take over hosting and coordinating weekly radio shows, with responsibilities including selecting speakers for each week's panel – ensuring women's voices were represented – and choosing topics, which were strongly shaped by feedback received through listeners' calls and questions, providing valuable data to inform follow-up sessions. While the government used to sponsor similar radio sessions (such as those held for the annual Farmer's Day) these tended to be irregular and focused on general discussions that often failed to address specific community concerns. The structured format of the project's weekly radio sessions offered a renewed, evidence-based approach to organising programmes aimed at strengthening the adaptive capacities of vulnerable groups.

Partnerships with local NGOs, including a community radio station, played a key role in setting up and planning events, contributing to their sustainability through the organisations' established and ongoing presence in the area. Collaborations were also formed with local groups in the municipalities, such as the dry season farmers' association, women's livelihood associations, and senior high schools. For instance, working with the Department of Education was instrumental in organising youth competitions that raised awareness among high school students about the environmental issues affecting their region, and in coordinating upcoming youth activities. A critical element across all these collaborations was their integration into existing activities and systems, as well as the strong linkages between different project initiatives and partners, which helped build resilience within the system should any single element fail.

In addition to deepening local understanding of climate issues across various institutions, collaborations with existing government offices and credible NGOs also encouraged stakeholders to explore more creative communication mediums – such as radio, songs and mobile apps – to enhance information delivery to their constituents. These partnerships helped ensure that the outreach tools developed were flexible, sustainable, and resilient to societal changes, by providing a channel for intensive feedback to the project team. This feedback loop enabled regular updates to the information, keeping it relevant to stakeholder needs, an essential factor in the success and longevity of project activities.



▲ Farmers receive information about where to access farm inputs at the Climate Advisory Resource Centre. *E-mages Multimedia*

INDIA



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1** Consulting with key government and academic stakeholders, alongside desk-based research, helped the Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group identify priority knowledge and capacity gaps related to peri-urban issues.
- 2** Documenting field experiences with farmer and women's groups generated a critical mass of knowledge on the value of peri-urban ecosystems and climate-smart agricultural practices, which was then consolidated into a compendium and toolkit.
- 3** Co-developing the toolkit with government partners and the School of Planning and Architecture helped integrate the training material into their broader programmes, enhancing its uptake and sustained use.
- 4** Demonstrating practical experiences of micro-resilience planning from field interventions enables rapid uptake by others, as the knowledge is directly applicable, relevant and easy to replicate.

[View more India case studies in Challenges 2, 4 and 7](#)

CASE STUDY

Tackling peri-urban capacity and governance gaps in India via bottom-up and top-down strategies

The Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG)'s work on peri-urban spaces in India revealed gaps in how these areas are conceptualised, along with persistent confusions around their territorial and spatial boundaries. These issues, compounded by governance gaps, have hindered development in these spaces. While districts and states informally recognise the importance of peri-urban ecosystems, the absence of clear directives and government orders prevents authorities from taking necessary action. To make matters worse, many urban local bodies have limited practical understanding of climate change-related issues. The absence of resilient development planning in urban areas poses a major barrier to implementing climate actions in both cities and their peripheries – an issue that demands urgent attention.

To address this multifaceted challenge, GEAG adopted a multipronged approach. The team initiated a series of brainstorming sessions with key government and academic institutions to identify perceived knowledge gaps regarding the role of peri-urban ecosystems in urban resilience. These discussions, complemented by desk-based research and a review of existing documentation, helped clarify the areas needing to be addressed.

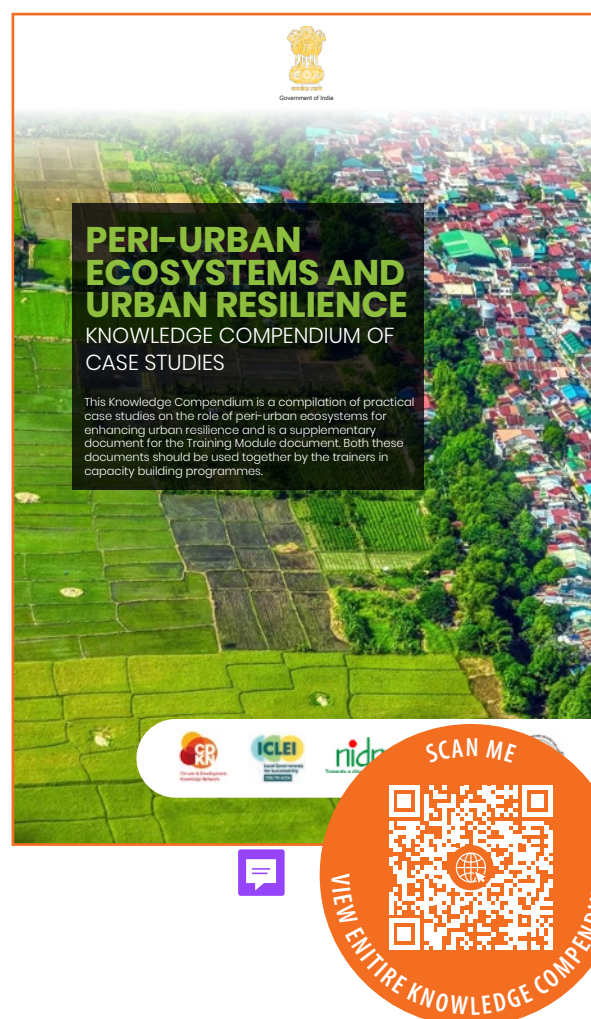
In addition, GEAG implemented bottom-up, practical actions – such as sustainable farming practices in peri-urban areas, ecosystem conservation efforts and gender-responsive livelihood initiatives – in the peripheries of several cities across India. Throughout the process, the organisation engaged with urban poor communities, women and other marginalised groups who are disproportionately affected by climate change and disaster events and whose responses to these challenges offer valuable insights into micro-level resilience planning and locally driven solutions. These practical field-based experiences were documented to build a critical mass of knowledge that could be used as an advocacy tool to showcase success stories directly from peri-urban spaces to decision-makers.

These and other case studies highlighting the importance of peri-urban ecosystem health for urban resilience across India were compiled into a **knowledge compendium** aimed at strengthening institutional capacities. Through this process, the team realised that community-led models and experiential knowledge tend to replicate quickly, thanks to their practical nature, accessibility, effectiveness, and alignment with broader principles of urban resilience planning.

Recognising that on-the-ground actions alone would be insufficient without addressing capacity and governance gaps – at ward, urban local body, city and district government levels – tied to peri-urban issues, GEAG expanded its focus to the national policy level. In partnership with the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM), which is mandated by the Government of India to lead training and capacity development in disaster prevention and preparedness, GEAG co-developed a **Capacity Toolkit on peri-urban ecosystems for urban resilience**. The toolkit offers a detailed training design aimed at equipping policymakers, decision-makers, elected members, academics and practitioners with the knowledge and skills to generate ecosystem-based solutions, particularly those linked to peri-urban ecosystems, to enhance overall urban resilience.

The collaboration with NIDM was strategic, as their co-ownership of the toolkit increases the likelihood of integrating peri-urban issues into broader training programmes. Similarly, **GEAG partnered with the School of Planning and Architecture** of Bhopal to co-develop the toolkit and train their faculty and students – India's future city planners – on mainstreaming ecosystems-based resilience.

By focusing efforts at the national level, GEAG aims to catalyse policy changes and resource allocations that can cascade down to state, city and district levels. Once national directives are in place, they can support capacity strengthening, resource mobilisation and the formulation of schemes and programmes at the state level. These, in turn, can enable effective operational changes at the city and district levels, translating into tangible actions on the ground. Collaboration with strategic, like-minded institutions across government, academia and civil society is critical for policy mainstreaming, disseminating field-level experiences, and strengthening broader advocacy efforts around the importance of peri-urban ecosystems for urban resilience.



▲ Farmer and trainer Meera Chaudhary demonstrates sustainable farming practices, offering insights on micro-level resilience planning for peri-urban areas. GEAG

ECUADOR



KEY TAKEAWAYS

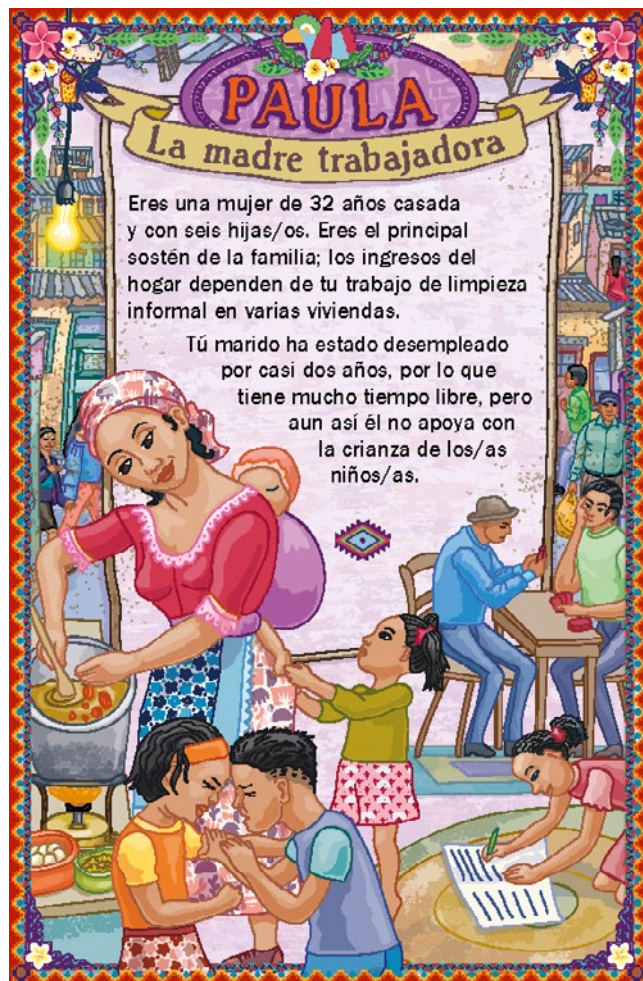
- 1 Developing training material in response to stakeholder requests, and in close collaboration with key partners, can enhance their relevance, encourage broader dissemination and support long-term use. Ecuador's gender and climate change toolkit strengthened capacities to integrate gender perspectives into climate initiatives through technical content, curated reading resources and a tailored game.

View more case studies on Ecuador in Challenges ③ and ⑥

CASE STUDY

Strengthening capacities to integrate a gender-responsive approach in climate change management in Ecuador

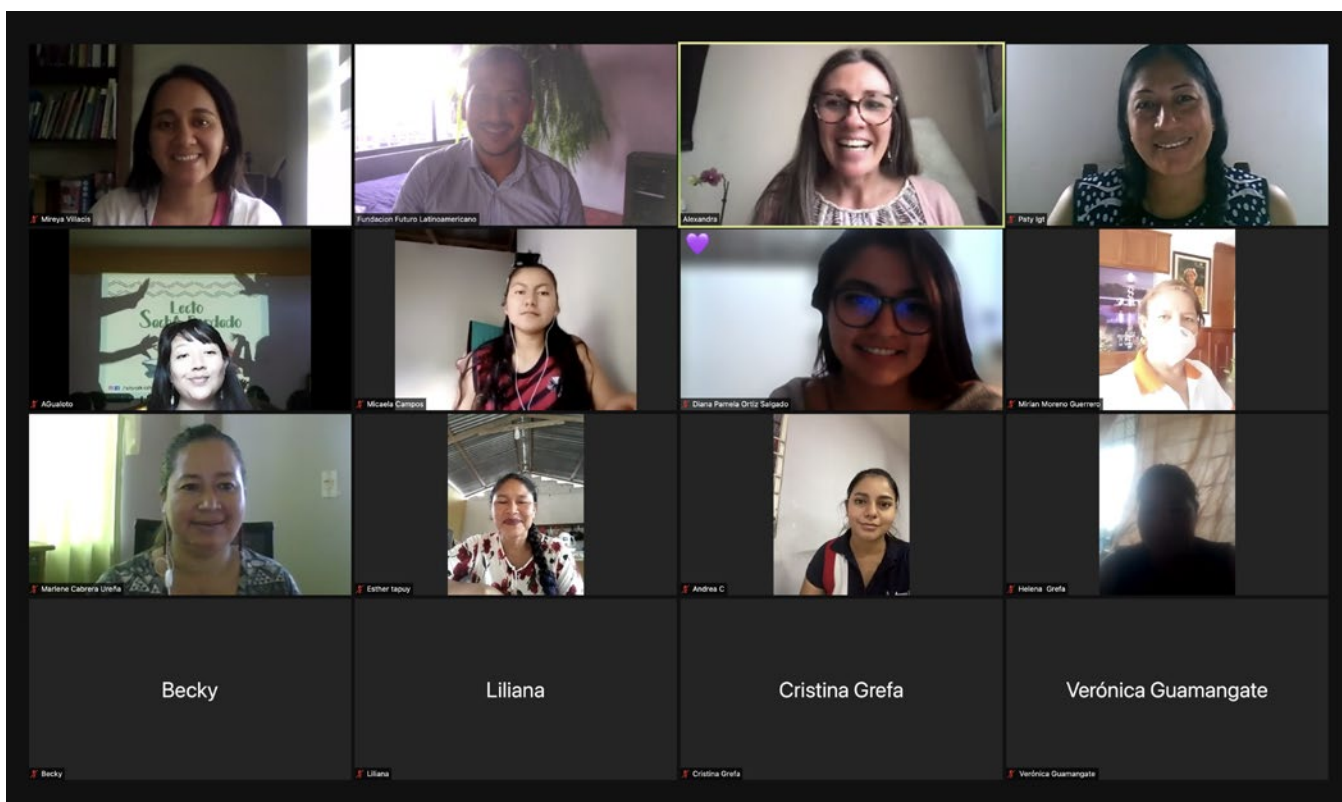
Building on a 2019 training course on gender and climate change conducted with national government officials in Ecuador, the CDKN Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano (FFLA) team joined hands with the Ministry of Environment and the UNDP Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) support programme to formalise the course modules into a comprehensive toolkit. This **gender and climate change toolkit** was enhanced with practical examples, technical content and additional resources to support participants seeking deeper knowledge. It responded to a need identified by members of the **Technical Table on Gender and Climate Change** to strengthen capacities for integrating a gender perspective into climate-related projects and programmes.



▲ One of the character cards of the Latin America version of the 'Climate and Society' game, designed to help players explore climate risk and vulnerability through the eyes of different fictional community members highlighting gender and intersectional attributes. CDKN

Designed for a broad target audience, the toolkit was piloted in 2021 with a women's group in the Napo province of the Amazon region. In response to high levels of discrimination and violence against women, the Provincial Committee for the Rights of Women of Napo was established in 2010 to lead research, advocacy and campaigns addressing gender-based violence. While the women's committee had strong expertise in gender issues, they were less familiar with the intersection between gender and climate change. Through a series of weekly two-hour online sessions, participants tested the toolkit's flexible materials, including an **interactive game** designed to help players explore climate risks by stepping into the shoes of different community characters in a fictional town of Ecuador.

The training helped make the connections between climate change and gender inequalities more visible. Participants gained awareness of how climate impacts – such as flooding – can disrupt children's education, placing additional caregiving burdens on women, and how changes in water quality and availability affect agriculture, a sector largely driven by women. With the provincial leader of Napo being an indigenous woman and an active member of the women's committee, this new understanding could potentially influence the region's political agenda, advancing the recognition of gender and climate change concerns.



▲ Online gender and climate change course session with women from the Napo province in the Amazon region of Ecuador. Franco Moreno, FFLA

PATHWAY B

Move beyond written outputs by promoting peer exchange and experiential learning

CASE STUDIES



NEPAL

Piloting proposed solutions and integrating diverse types of knowledge to enhance climate-resilient water management in **Nepal**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Piloting and implementing collectively identified solutions through the *Pani Chautari* fostered innovation, collaboration, ownership and trust by enabling iterative assessment of their effectiveness and acceptability.
- 2 Bringing together diverse types of knowledge highlighted the value of local stakeholders' experiential and applied insights as a complement to scientific analyses.
- 3 Presenting research findings on the impacts of climate change and urbanisation on water resources – and showcasing pilot projects that offered alternatives to conventional engineering approaches – opened new pathways for addressing Dhulikhel's water challenges and demonstrated the value of research in informing policy.



NEPAL

Demonstrating climate-smart agriculture technologies in **Nepal** to complement training and knowledge sharing

- 1 Showcasing successful approaches through demonstration sites complements theoretical training by strengthening local capacities, empowering community-based stakeholders and encouraging innovation.
- 2 Prioritising the needs of vulnerable groups entails developing accessible and relevant knowledge products suited to their needs and facilitating their active participation.



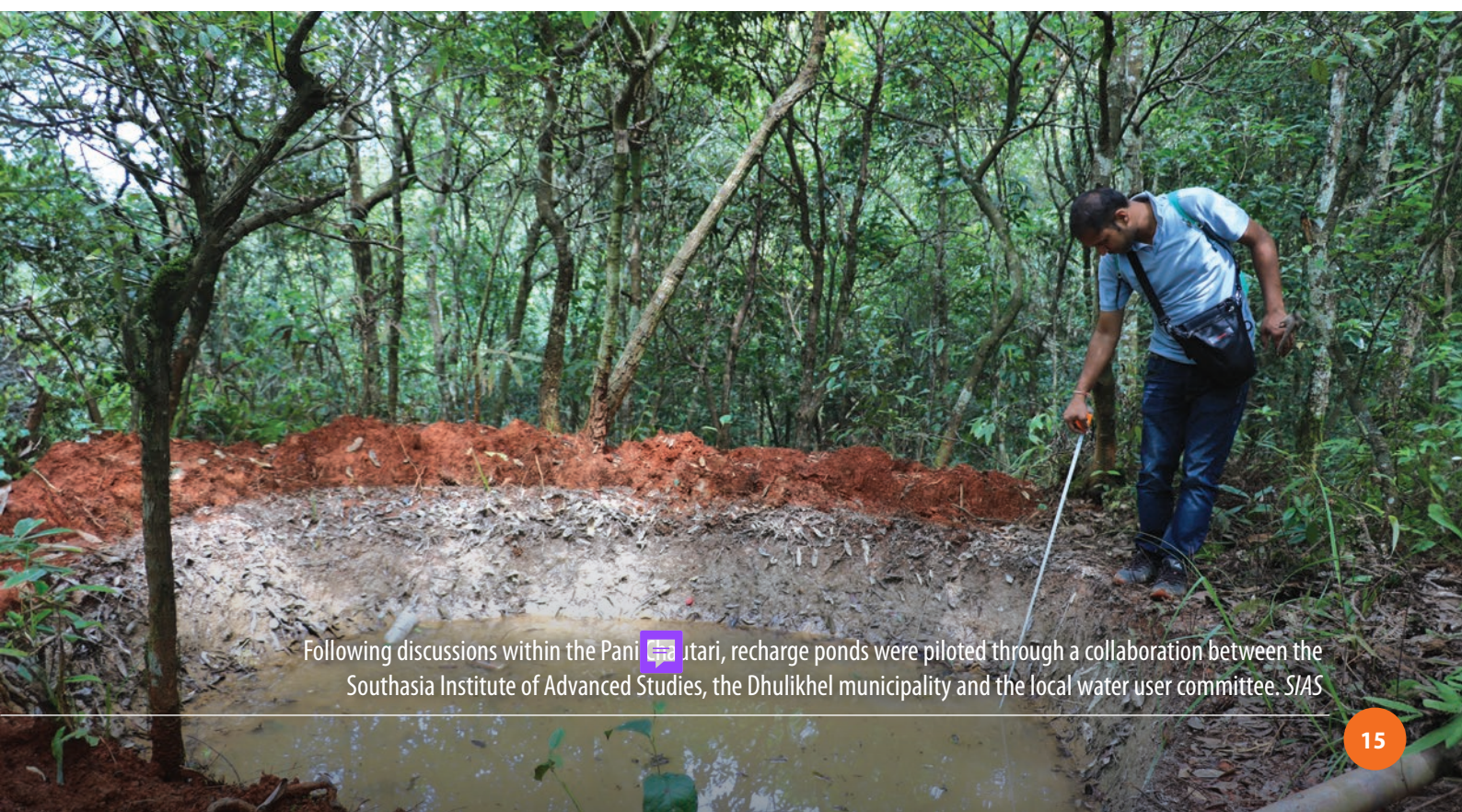
REGIONAL

Strengthening gender mainstreaming and adaptation planning in **Latin America** through peer dialogue

- 1 Creating spaces for open exchange between stakeholders enables mutual learning from successes and setbacks, supports the adaptation of strategies to diverse contexts, and helps build stronger networks of practice.
- 2 Discussing strategies for mainstreaming gender in climate policy with peers enabled the sharing of practical approaches, common challenges and actionable insights, fostering innovation and promoting more inclusive climate action.

Move beyond written outputs by promoting peer exchange and experiential learning

Learning becomes more impactful when actors can observe successful case studies firsthand. Engaging stakeholders in their own language and involving them in site visits, projects and peer learning activities often proves more effective in shifting their understanding of climate change on the ground than conventional training courses. For example, local government staff benefit from visiting implementation sites and interacting directly with local stakeholders such as farmers. Mayors, in particular, value peer-to-peer dialogue and gain insights from cities that have faced and overcome similar challenges – such as evidenced in **the exchange** between institutional actors from three Kenyan cities, which highlighted lessons around non-motorised transport. Promoting learning from on-the-ground experiences involves harnessing diverse types of knowledge – from practitioners, community members and government technical staff – who make daily decisions and continuously adapt their responses. Knowledge brokers are well-positioned to convene these varied knowledge holders and communicate experience-based insights from the field to policymakers, thereby fostering an evidence-based understanding of climate challenges and solutions. These practical actions can help generate insights that strengthen livelihoods, provide opportunities to test and refine adaptation measures, and can serve as adaptable and replicable examples for other contexts, ultimately strengthening the relevance and effectiveness of local policies and programmes.



Following discussions within the Pani Patahari, recharge ponds were piloted through a collaboration between the Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies, the Dhulikhel municipality and the local water user committee. S/AS

NEPAL



KEY TAKEAWAYS

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- 2** Bringing together diverse types of knowledge highlighted the value of local stakeholders' experiential and applied insights as a complement to scientific analyses.
- 3** Presenting research findings on the impacts of climate change and urbanisation on water resources – and showcasing pilot projects that offered alternatives to conventional engineering approaches – opened new pathways for addressing Dhulikhel's water challenges and demonstrated the value of research in informing policy.

[View more Nepal case studies in Challenges 1 2 6 and 7](#)

CASE STUDY

Piloting proposed solutions and integrating diverse types of knowledge to enhance climate-resilient water management in Nepal

Water supply and distribution are among the many competing priorities faced by small towns in Nepal. Until recently, Dhulikhel's leadership primarily focused on infrastructural engineering solutions to collect and distribute water, viewing these visible interventions as a demonstration of commitment and leadership to the electorate. As a result, little attention was given to institutional approaches or long-term processes that could meet water demand and support sustainable water management.

One of the strengths of the *Pani Chautari* lies in its emphasis on collectively identifying locally appropriate solutions. Through piloting and implementation, these solutions help develop capacities, foster innovation and promote the emergence of water champions. For example, piloting recharge ponds to augment spring water volumes in Dhulikhel enabled stakeholders to assess the effectiveness, cost, social acceptability and any unforeseen adverse effects of this proposed solution. Piloting also fostered trust, collaboration and confidence in the intervention, supported by a meticulous monitoring process. The evidence generated – showing increased water volumes – demonstrated the value of upscaling the measure.


Recharge ponds were first researched and discussed within the *Pani Chautari*, and then implemented through a partnership between the Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS), the municipality and the local water user committee. This collaborative approach ensured institutional ownership for future funding, construction and maintenance. Subsequent *Pani Chautari* workshops served as deliberative platforms to review the implemented measures, reflect on their successes and shortcomings, and make necessary adjustments. This iterative and inclusive process highlights the level of continuous engagement required to ensure the sustainability of climate-resilient water management solutions.



In addition, early stakeholder engagement workshops conducted by SIAS highlighted specific research gaps, such as around the impact of land use changes on the upstream watershed, or strategies for water conservation and recycling. Given that some of these questions fell outside the scope of the SIAS research project, the knowledge gaps were addressed by local experts participating in the workshops – including long-standing community-based water user groups and technical staff from various government levels. Their experiential, practice-based knowledge, complemented by institutional memory, was pooled and harnessed to co-produce actionable insights.

For instance, a field visit to the upstream Roshi watershed allowed the Dhulikhel group to observe current and evolving land use patterns firsthand. Drawing on their multidisciplinary and practical expertise, participants discussed the implications for future water yield of the watershed and deliberated on next steps. Similarly, in response to declining spring water levels, a visit to a neighbouring village that was revitalising traditional ponds provided concrete evidence of the solution's potential. This inspired the piloting of recharge ponds in Dhulikhel.

By documenting the results of pilot initiatives conducted by SIAS, the municipality began to recognise the merits of field research and evidence generation in informing policy and scaling up successful interventions. This shift in perspective led multiple stakeholders to appreciate the importance of exploring alternative water sources beyond upstream-downstream transfers from the Roshi watershed. As a result, innovations in water management emerged, including the introduction of incentives for rainwater harvesting and water recycling by commercial users, as well as the revival of traditional practices such as restoring abandoned springs.



Knowledge for Change series:
Lessons from Nepal

CDKN
Climate & Development
Knowledge Network

LEARNING STORY
July 2022

Key messages

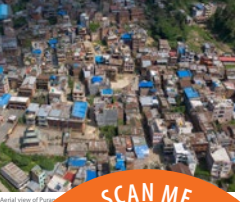
- Facilitating evidence-informed participatory dialogues in the urban water sector in Dhulikhel in Nepal has been shown to build relationships, strengthen capacities and harness scientific expertise, along with co-developing practical experiential knowledge with stakeholders to enhance local resilience.
- This approach to multi-stakeholder water governance provided an opportunity to address existing conflict related to water supply amongst diverse stakeholder groups, by integrating different voices for more equitable, accepted and owned solutions.
- When involved in these participatory spaces, the Dhulikhel local authority began to appreciate the value of community-based water schemes and dialogue as a crucial complement to physical infrastructural solutions. The municipality also began to see the value of research in better informing its decision-making processes.
- Collaborative piloting of proposed measures to address water challenges helped to bring together evidence from multiple knowledge systems and prioritise particular interventions. Partnerships were also created for their design, testing, funding, implementation and monitoring. This ensured ownership and sustainability, bolstered in many cases by the institutionalisation of these piloted solutions.

Authors: Lucia Soudanillo and Pratibha Cakul, CDKN.
Editing and review: Greta Sarda, Lisa McKenna, Brindha Sathya, Muel Dagar and Shrinasa Moosa, CDKN, as well as Gyana Maskey, SIAS.

This learning story forms part of the CDKN Knowledge for Change series, which reflects on the common challenges, lessons and successes CDKN and its partners have encountered in facilitating evidence-based decision-making to accelerate climate action. The aim of this work is to investigate different tools and approaches for enhancing the use of knowledge in decision-making, the barriers encountered in facilitating change, and useful lessons for others who navigate similar challenges.

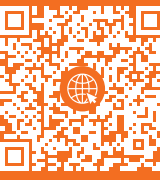
Collaborative urban water management bridges knowledge and action in Nepal

This learning story shares the work done by the South Asia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS) over four years (2016–2020) to promote evidence-based action on sustainable water resource management in Dhulikhel, Nepal. SIAS, a policy research institute based in Kathmandu, played the role of knowledge broker as they produced, brought together and synthesised knowledge from multiple sources, convened stakeholders to discuss water management challenges, built and enhanced relationships and networks among multiple actors, and contributed to strengthened capacities and action around water issues.



Aerial view of Dhulikhel

SCAN ME



VIEW ENTIRE LEARNING STORY



▲ Field visits enable participants to observe land use changes firsthand, engage in discussions around potential interventions, and draw insights from the successes and challenges of existing initiatives. CDKN

NEPAL



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Showcasing successful approaches through demonstration sites complements theoretical training by strengthening local capacities, empowering community-based stakeholders and encouraging innovation.
- 2 Prioritising the needs of vulnerable groups entails developing accessible and relevant knowledge products suited to their needs and facilitating their active participation.

🔗 View more **Nepal** case studies in Challenges 1 2 6 and 7

CASE STUDY

Demonstrating climate-smart agriculture technologies in Nepal to complement training and knowledge sharing

In partnership with the Chief Minister Environment Friendly Model Agriculture Village Programme across various municipalities in Gandaki province, LI-BIRD provided technical support to design and establish three climate-smart agriculture (CSA) demonstration sites. Located in three districts across the high and mid hills of the province, these sites were selected to showcase good practices as climate-smart villages, reinforcing the theoretical knowledge shared during **CSA training workshops**. The workshops covered CSA concepts, approaches and strategies – such as improved cattle sheds and farmyard manure management, the use of plastic tunnels, and insect pest control – through presentations and group exercises. These were followed by field visits where participants explored the practical application of different CSA technologies and practices. While members of the farmers' groups at the demonstration sites were initially unfamiliar with CSA concepts, through the training, they began adopting and sharing these practices with others. Women farmers, in particular, gained confidence in sharing their learning with local, national and international visitors to the demonstration sites, and taking on roles as both spokespeople and trainers.



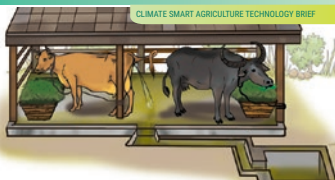
▲ Woman in agriculture field, Agyauli village, Nepal. Credit LI-BIRD

Staff from the Ministry of Land Management, Agriculture and Cooperatives in Gandaki province also deepened their understanding of CSA technologies, with the demonstration sites increasingly serving as 'knowledge and learning centres' for policymakers, farmer groups, development agencies, students and researchers.

To promote leadership among socially excluded groups and women in community-based planning and implementation, Li-BIRD ensured the active participation of women, Indigenous and marginalised groups (including *Dalits* and *Janajatis*) in project activities. Recognising that some of the participants were illiterate, the organisation developed and distributed accessible knowledge products, such as posters and flyers. The exchange of knowledge and provision of information through training, exposure visits and other activities, points to the positive impact of the model villages programme as a mechanism for strengthening climate resilience in the province and more broadly.


Animal Shed and Farm Yard Manure Improvement

CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY BRIEF



BACKGROUND

The improved animal shed is defined as the place where manure is collected and stored in a controlled manner. The improved shed is designed to collect manure from the animal and store it in a secure and hygienic manner. The improved shed is designed to collect manure from the animal and store it in a secure and hygienic manner. The improved shed is designed to collect manure from the animal and store it in a secure and hygienic manner.



Use of Information and Communications Technology for Climate Friendly Agriculture

CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY BRIEF



Introduction

Information and Communications Technology (ICT) plays a crucial role in climate change adaptation and mitigation. The use of ICT in agriculture can help farmers to access weather information, market prices, and other important information. The use of ICT in agriculture can help farmers to access weather information, market prices, and other important information.



Organic Fertilizer (Jeevamrit) and Organic Pesticide (Beejamrit)

CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY BRIEF



INTRODUCTION

Zero Budget Natural Farming System (ZBNFS) is an organic farming system that uses natural resources to produce food. Jeevamrit is an organic fertilizer prepared by fermenting the mixture of cow dung and urine. It provides nutrients to the plants and improves the activity of beneficial microorganisms and earthworms in the soil. During the fermentation process for bacteria present in the cow dung and urine uses the nutrient from the soil and multiplies in their numbers. A full of soil is taken exactly from the place where the cow dung and urine are used. It is to be applied because by doing so the microorganisms of the same soil can be used that can give effective results. It also increases the number of harmful fungus and bacteria in the soil hence it is beneficial for the plants. According to Pankaj, there is a saving in the cost of chemical fertilizers. After the continuous use of Jeevamrit for three years the soil itself becomes full of the microorganisms required for the plant (Prasanna, 2016).




Plastic House with Drip Irrigation

CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY BRIEF



Introduction

Plastic house is a structure similar to a greenhouse where plants are grown under a plastic cover. The plastic cover helps to retain the heat and moisture in the house. The plastic cover helps to retain the heat and moisture in the house. The plastic cover helps to retain the heat and moisture in the house.



Climate-Smart Village (CSV)

Climate-Smart Village is an approach that envisions to effectively test, demonstrate, promote and scale-up climate-smart agriculture (CSA) technologies and practices in the climate vulnerable communities by engaging local institutions and integrating in their plans and policies.

Components in the CSV Sites

- Farmers Knowledge
- Climate and Agriculture Development Finance
- Local and National Public and Private Institution
- National and Sub-national Plan and Policies
- Climate Information Service and Insurance

Climate-smart technologies and practices

Steps of CSV Approach Implementation

- Site Selection**
 - Identification of area based on agroclimatic relevance, farmer's need, stakeholder discussion and use of climate analogue tool
- Baseline Study**
 - Socioeconomic survey of the identified area, analysis of agriculture production system, vulnerability assessment and climate risk assessment for risk based planning
- Action Planning**
 - Joint planning workshop in presence of farmers, concerned stakeholders and researchers along with technical expertise to identify CSA technologies and practices best suited to the identified area, and prioritize them based on farmer's preference and cost/benefit analysis
- Implementation**
 - Joint financing with multi-stakeholder coordination (public and private sectors) for promoting CSA technologies and practices including inputs and capacity building support to the farmers
- Monitoring and Evaluation**
 - Regular and joint monitoring by the implementing partners (public and private sector) and other concerned stakeholders of the programme sites

CSV in similar locations and plans and programmes of



जलवायुमैत्री गाउँ

जलवायु परिवर्तनको कृषि क्षेत्रमा पार्ने प्रभावलाई घुमाउन जलवायुमैत्री कृषि प्रविधि र अभ्यासहरू पहिचान, परीक्षण र विस्तार गरी स्थिति भौतिक क्षेत्रमा समुदायको समन्वयन र समर्थन पुर्याउने दृष्टि जलवायुमैत्री गाउँ हो।

जलवायुमैत्री गाउँका खण्डहरू

- नगानीको अनुमान एवं आर्थिक स्रोतको व्यवस्थापन
- स्थानीय तथा राष्ट्रिय दृष्ट्या सामुदायिक, सरकारी र निजी संस्थाहरू बीच सहकार्य
- राष्ट्रिय तथा स्थानीय तहको नीति र योजनामा समावेशिकरण
- जलवायु सम्बन्धी सूचनाको उपलब्धता र प्रयोग तथा कृषि विनाशको विस्तार

अनुमान तथा सूचनाहरूको (Monitoring and Evaluation)

- स्थानीय तथा राष्ट्रिय तहका संस्थाहरूको सहभागितामा कार्यक्रमको निगरानी अनुमान तथा सुधार

जलवायुमैत्री गाउँ कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयनका चरणहरू

- स्थान छनौट (Site Selection)**
 - सरोकारवाहक (सरकारी, गैरसरकारी, निजी निष्पक्ष) बीच सकारात्मक आधारमा जलवायु परिवर्तनको बढी प्रभाव परेको ठाउँ
- आधारभूत सर्वेक्षण (Baseline Study)**
 - छनौट भएको गाउँको सामाजिक तथा आर्थिक संरचना, कृषि उत्पादन प्रणाली, जलवायु परिवर्तनको जोखिमलाई पहिचान गर्ने
- कार्ययोजना निर्माण (Action Planning)**
 - आधारभूत सर्वेक्षणबाट आएको जानकारी, जलवायु परिवर्तनको जोखिम तथा समुदायको प्राथमिकताको आधारमा समुदाय कृषक, सरोकारवाहकको सहभागितामा कार्ययोजना निर्माण
- कार्यान्वयन (Implementation)**
 - स्थिति सरोकारवाहकको समन्वय तथा सहभागितामा जलवायुमैत्री कृषि प्रविधि तथा अभ्यासहरूको पहिचान तथा विस्तार गरी कार्यक्रम कार्यान्वयनका लागि किसानहरूको क्षमता अभिवृद्धि
- अनुमान तथा सूचनाहरूको (Monitoring and Evaluation)**
 - स्थानीय तथा राष्ट्रिय तहका संस्थाहरूको सहभागितामा कार्यक्रमको निगरानी अनुमान तथा सुधार



REGIONAL



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Creating spaces for open exchange between stakeholders enables mutual learning from successes and setbacks, supports the adaptation of strategies to diverse contexts, and helps build stronger networks of practice.
- 2 Discussing strategies for mainstreaming gender in climate policy with peers enabled the sharing of practical approaches, common challenges and actionable insights, fostering innovation and promoting more inclusive climate action.

View more **Regional – Latin America** case studies in Challenges 1 and 4

CASE STUDY

Strengthening gender mainstreaming and adaptation planning in Latin America through peer dialogue

In June 2019, experts from the Ministries of Environment of Peru, Chile and Ecuador gathered in Chile to exchange knowledge and experiences on integrating a gender approach into climate policy. Given the cultural, social and political barriers to mainstreaming gender in the region, learning from peers in similar roles proved to be a key success factor.

The Peruvian expert, for instance, shared how Peru developed its Action Plan for Gender and Climate Change to reduce gender inequalities in climate adaptation and mitigation efforts across sectors such as energy, water resources, food security, forestry and other areas. She explained how Peru's nationally determined contribution (NDC) incorporated a gender perspective in multiple ways: through inclusive language and visuals; capacity strengthening for government officials on gender mainstreaming; and promoting women's participation in traditionally male-dominated spaces, including by closing educational gaps through targeted training, such as for Indigenous women.



▲ Participatory process for developing Peru's gender and climate change action plan, 2015. Peru's Ministry of Environment (MINAM)



Similarly, in **Ecuador**, the NDC was developed through a participatory process involving numerous sectoral workshops that maintained strong gender balance and were guided by gender experts. Discussions focused on how to mainstream gender by ensuring that projects and initiatives not only avoid reinforcing existing inequalities but actively seek to transform gender roles and relations.

In contrast, while Chile's national adaptation plan mentions gender principles and its national climate change strategy was developed through inclusive processes, concrete measures to mainstream gender into planning actions are still lacking. The lessons shared by Peru and Ecuador offered valuable insights into potential pathways Chile could follow to strengthen gender mainstreaming in its climate policies.

The session reinforced the importance of involving gender mainstreaming experts and ensuring inclusive processes, both in the development of measures and in the dissemination of results, to foster greater ownership and commitment. Furthermore, it highlighted the

value of peer learning, where professionals working on similar issues could exchange challenges, share lessons learned, and offer practical recommendations for moving forward.

In a similar vein, a second initiative in 2020 brought together government representatives from six Latin American countries through a virtual learning process facilitated by CDKN, FFLA and the NAP Global Network. The sessions focused on topics identified by participants as critical to advancing their national adaptation plans: vertical integration, monitoring and evaluation, and climate risk assessment tools. Each session combined expert input with open dialogue, allowing participants to share practical experiences and reflect on common challenges, such as intersectoral coordination, data gaps, and the lack of global adaptation metrics. Despite the limitations of virtual engagement, the sessions fostered mutual learning and helped participants identify actionable steps for strengthening their national processes, highlighting the value of peer learning in strengthening capacities and promoting innovation.



▲ Gender specialists from Peru and Ecuador share their experiences of inclusive climate policy and planning at a COP25 event hosted by Peru's Ministry of Environment and CDKN. *Michelle du Toit*

PATHWAY

C

Strengthen
capacities to
access climate
finance

CASE STUDIES



COLOMBIA

Supporting **Colombian**
stakeholders to access
climate finance



ECUADOR

Partnering to train
Ecuadorian municipalities
on climate finance issues

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Delivering a climate finance course to municipal stakeholders helped build foundational knowledge and supported the development of draft proposals for submission to financial institutions.
 - 1 Providing a blended finance guide clarified key concepts for relevant actors and supported the mobilisation of private funds to expand financing options for climate projects.
-
- 1 Organising climate finance training for municipal stakeholders in partnership with the Association of Municipalities and an academic institution ensured rigour, credibility and a well-targeted audience.
 - 2 Adopting an adaptive and flexible course design ensured the training remained responsive, relevant and effective for participants.





Strengthen capacities to access climate finance

Knowledge brokers can play a vital role in strengthening the skills of government staff to navigate the landscape of national and international funding opportunities – including small grants – and to develop strong funding proposals. Practical training courses that include the drafting of proposals allow participants to refine and use them for actual applications. Additionally, connecting stakeholders to technical expertise and further training opportunities can support ongoing skill development and enhance access to climate funding



Collaborating with key partners from governmental and non-governmental institutions enhances the relevance and effectiveness of capacity strengthening activities. *FFLA*

COLOMBIA



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Delivering a climate finance course to municipal stakeholders helped build foundational knowledge and supported the development of draft proposals for submission to financial institutions.
- 2 Providing a blended finance guide clarified key concepts for relevant actors and supported the mobilisation of private funds to expand financing options for climate projects.



View more case studies on **Colombia** in Challenges ③ and ④

CASE STUDY

Supporting Colombian stakeholders to access climate finance

To expand financial options for implementing the **Carepa Integrated Plan for Climate Change Management**, CDKN partnered with the regional Environmental Corporation to support the development of a climate finance course tailored to public and private stakeholders in the municipality. This training, designed to reflect the context, challenges and needs of municipalities like Carepa (and thus relevant to others in the Uraba-Antioquia region), provided basic tools and concepts to strengthen project proposal development skills. Following an online series of 11 sessions in late 2020, the Agriculture and Environment Secretariat of Carepa designed a project proposal aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the use of improved wood stoves for cooking, which would also address environmental health issues linked with indoor air pollution in rural homes.



To strengthen access to climate finance at the national level, ~~In partnership,~~ CDKN partnered with Colombia's National Planning Department (DNP) to develop **a practical guide on blended finance**. As coordinator of the Financial Management Committee of the National Climate Change System, DNP plays a key role in shaping the country's climate



can help multiply the impact of public and philanthropic investments, attract private sector engagement, and close funding gaps in underserved regions or sectors. However, a lack of understanding among project proponents, financial institutions and public sector actors has limited its uptake.

To address this, DNP incorporated the Blended Finance Guideline into the 'toolbox' of Colombia's National Strategy for Climate Finance. This aims to raise awareness among financial institutions and other key stakeholders about the potential of blended finance to support NDC implementation.



By promoting a mix of financial instruments (such as bonds, credit lines and guarantees) the guideline seeks to increase available funding while reducing the risks associated with climate-related projects, ultimately encouraging greater private sector investment.

CASE STUDY

Partnering to train Ecuadorian municipalities on climate finance issues

In Ecuador, one of the Ministry of Environment's strategic priorities for achieving its nationally determined contribution (NDC) goals is strengthening capacities, including in climate finance. While a successful **climate finance training** targeting national-level sectoral stakeholders was conducted in 2019, a gap remained in developing local-level capacities. To address this, a partnership was formed between the Ministry of Environment, CDKN/FFLA, the German cooperation (GIZ), Andina University and the Association of Municipalities to coordinate a second edition of the climate finance training – this time focused on municipal governments.

While Andina University oversaw the academic certification of the course and ensured its sustainability through future replication, the Association of Municipalities played a key role in tailoring the content to the target audience – particularly the module on municipal governance. The association also supported the development of selection criteria for participating municipalities and helped disseminate the call for applications. Given the technical challenge of engaging all 221 Ecuadorian municipalities on a single virtual platform, having clear participation criteria was essential to ensure that the 30 selected municipalities demonstrated full commitment to completing the course.

An adaptive and flexible course design meant that, in addition to the weekly two-hour online session focused on content delivery and interactive discussions, a weekly two-hour 'virtual cafe' was introduced early on to provide space for addressing participants' questions and concerns. Organisers also met weekly to reflect on the previous session's successes and challenges, and to trial the upcoming session – ensuring consistent quality and responsiveness. The inclusion of a climate finance proposal as a participant deliverable further strengthened the course's practical relevance, allowing attendees to apply their learning directly within their local contexts.



ECUADOR



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1** Organising climate finance training for municipal stakeholders in partnership with the Association of Municipalities and an academic institution ensured rigour, credibility and a well-targeted audience.
- 2** Adopting an adaptive and flexible course design ensured the training remained responsive, relevant and effective for participants.

[View more case studies on Ecuador in Challenges 3 and 6](#)

Endnotes

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THIS SERIES IS STRUCTURED AS FOLLOWS:

- CHALLENGE 1** Key stakeholders lack sufficient information about the significance and urgency of climate change.
- CHALLENGE 2** Climate change is not sufficiently high on political agendas or part of institutional mandates.
- CHALLENGE 3** Climate change is mainly seen as environmental ministries' responsibility, with little cross-sector collaboration.
- CHALLENGE 4** Subnational governments lack guidance and support to implement climate change related legislation and policy set at national levels.
- CHALLENGE 5** Limited capacities and resource allocation prevent climate change integration and implementation.
- CHALLENGE 6** Gatekeeping and bureaucracy can act as bottlenecks and delay progress on projects.
- CHALLENGE 7** Local communities lack sufficient support to integrate climate issues into their actions.



ABOUT CDKN

The Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) works to improve the well-being of the most climate-affected people in the global South, especially marginalised groups, through transformative climate action. CDKN is managed by SouthSouthNorth, in partnership with Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano (FFLA) and ICLEI South Asia, and co-funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC).

We work in partnership with public, civil society and private sectors to mobilise knowledge, leadership and capacity in the global South in support of locally-owned and -led climate action.

Please visit: www.cdkn.org

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