Climate Resilience and Food Security in Central America

CDKN Project Code RSGL 0024g
Project webpage
Project duration: April 2012 – March 2014
Project value: £ 500,358

The overarching aim of this research is to strengthen the long-term food security of highly vulnerable populations in Central America by improving the climate resilience of food systems at different spatial and temporal scales. This project aspires to fill the research and policy gaps caused by an overemphasis on food production with little regard for other aspects of food security, such as access to food, utilization and stability. Moreover, existing disaster response strategies and food security policies have tended to focus on predicting and managing the impacts of climate events, rarely contributing to building long-term resilience among poor communities.

To overcome these gaps, the project focuses on researching frameworks for understanding food system climate resilience and developing practical indicators through an integrated engagement and capacity building process at different levels of decision making. Indicators will contribute to the understanding of the sources of climate resilience in food systems, particularly among vulnerable communities. At the same time, they will provide policy makers at local, regional and national levels and development practitioners with a tool to identify entry-points for their actions and to assess their impacts.

**Project partners**
- International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) (Anne Hammill, Marius Keller)
- Institute for Social and Environmental Transition (ISET)
- Action Against Hunger - Spain (ACF-E) (Ramón Guevara Flores)
- Faculty of Economic and Business Sciences and the Institute Development and Applied Research – Nitapán, part of the Central American University (UCA) in Nicaragua (José Luis Solorzano, Ceferino Wilson)
- Regional University Center of the Atlantic Coast (CURLA), part of the National Autonomous University of Honduras (UNAH) (Claudia Lardizabal)

**Key project impacts**
- High value (£500k);
- Wide geographical range for research, with specific focus on Central America: Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua;
- Provides foundations for further research on the crucial topic of food security, additionally linking it to disaster response strategies and research;
- Touches upon a number of CDKN’s core themes, including CCD, disaster risk reduction.

**Fit within CDKN’s portfolio**
- The project fits in the general CDKN theme of climate compatible development. Its focus on disaster response strategies (in relation to food security) also makes it particularly suitable to contribute to the cluster on disaster risk reduction.

**Research impact**
- Development of an indicator framework to contribute to the understanding of climate resilience in food systems, aimed at informing development policies and strategies in such a way as to strengthen resilience;

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- Communities will benefit from improved policies and programs as a result of the utilization of the tools by policy makers, as well as from more immediate action at the local level thanks to the utilization of community tools.
- Policy makers across the world can build on the outputs and lessons learned from this project.

**Thought leadership**
- The research will draw on the strength of three sets of actors: IISD will contribute knowledge and experience in climate risk management and associated decision-support tools, indicator development for agricultural climate resilience and adaptive capacity, and training programs. ISET will bring its recent body of research related to urban and rural resilience and indicators, including on food systems. Action Against Hunger adds the on-the-ground perspective and experience in food security and will be the main local implementing agency along with three universities located in the focus countries.
- The project will therefore build on and expand existing knowledge and practice in the areas of climate risk, food security and resilience indicators. It will further engage with decision-makers at different levels, work closely with both northern and southern partners, and put emphasis on capacity building of policy-makers and communities.

**Policy interactions**
- Specifically targets policy makers and planners at national, regional and local levels, providing crucial information feeding their design of climate resilient disaster prevention and food security policies;
- Early and continuous involvement of policy makers in the elaboration and application of resilience indicators (through workshops and cooperation of in-country partners with agricultural ministries on food security issues);
- Through guidance on the three tools, policy briefs and other means of communication, the project will also reach policy makers and development practitioners in other countries – international impact;
- Communities will be closely involved in the participatory vulnerability and capacity assessments, as well as in the process of customizing resilience indicators for each community.

**Capacity building**
- Long-term monitoring and evaluation: the indicator framework will enable policy makers to measure food system climate resilience along with the impacts of food security policies and disaster response strategies on the respective indicators and can devise policy and practice changes to improve these impacts.
- Climate compatible development: the tools will also aid development agencies in the region, which can use the resilience indicators and other research output to improve their programs.

**Deliverables to date**
- 2-pager (brochure) of the project
- Web-site: [www.iisd.org/adaptation/CREFSCA](http://www.iisd.org/adaptation/CREFSCA)

**Deliverables expected**
- Food System Indicator Guidance Tool and Indicator Menu
- Community-level adaptive capacity and resilience indicators guidance tool relating to food system climate resilience
- Policy Analysis Tool
- At least two journal articles highlighting the intellectual progress achieved in the project.
- A number of policy briefs

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