

ARA-TLS Knowledge Synthesis Symposium 2024 – Asia Pacific

August 1 & 2 , 2024
Bangkok, Thailand



Overview

The Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA) is a global coalition of researchers, funders, policymakers, development bodies, and community-based organizations united in their commitment to action-oriented research for climate resilience. Transition Research undertook a Tracking, Learning, and Sharing (TLS) activity to systematically monitor and assess the progress of ARA members and partners toward achieving the Alliance's collective outcomes and operationalising the Adaptation Research for Impact Principles.

The TLS activity provides a dynamic platform for ARA members to engage actively with one another. It allows for peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and learning through a combination of online and offline spaces. This collaborative approach enables members to tap into each other's expertise, experiences, and resources for greater collective impact.

In pursuit of this objective, Transition Research hosted a symposium in Bangkok, bringing together members of the ARA Asia-Pacific community to share knowledge and insights from their experience of addressing critical issues in climate adaptation. These include developing locally-led adaptation initiatives, establishing metrics for measuring a adaptation success, integrating indigenous and local knowledge systems, and strengthening heat resilience.

Presentations delivered by organisations from the Asia-Pacific region provided a rich tapestry of perspectives and experiences. Overall, the symposium helped foster a deeper understanding of what the group had in common, as well as the unique challenges faced by different regions. Through guided discussions and networking opportunities, participants were able to gain valuable insights into how collective learning and cooperation informs and speeds up progress towards climate resilience.



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List of Abbreviations

- **ARA**: Adaptation Research Alliance
- **TLS**: Tracking, Learning, and Sharing
- **GPDP**: Gram Panchayat Development Plan
- **MHT**: Mahila Housing SEWA Trust
- **GEAG**: Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group
- **CSTEP**: The Center for Study of Science, Technology & Policy
- **CPE**: Center for People and Environment
- **AIDMI**: All India Disaster Mitigation Institute
- **SERAC**: Social and Environmental Research and Advocacy Centre
- **SRHR**: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Right

Indigenous & Local Knowledge Systems

The session explored the disproportionate impact of climate change on indigenous and local communities, seeking to understand how to empower them through Research and projects of ARA community members. Further, it also examined existing barriers to integrating local knowledge into climate resilience and adaptation efforts.

Key Insights

- **Empowering Community Leadership**

Empowering local communities to take charge of climate adaptation efforts ensures that strategies are deeply embedded in the local socio-cultural context, making them both relevant and sustainable.

- **Differentiating & Integrating Knowledge Systems**

Recognizing the distinction between local and indigenous knowledge is essential. Indigenous knowledge, rooted in a profound understanding of local ecosystems, plays a critical role in crafting effective, site-specific climate resilience strategies.

- **Promoting Inclusivity and Equity**

Prioritizing inclusivity and equity in adaptation efforts is crucial. This involves actively involving marginalized groups, both local and indigenous, in decision-making and tailoring interventions to meet their specific needs.

- **Adaptive and Dynamic Frameworks**

Implementing flexible, community-driven frameworks that adapt in real-time, based on ongoing learning and feedback, as key to building long-term, sustainable resilience.

The presentations showcased the ARA community members' efforts to empower local and indigenous communities through initiatives focused on gender and social inclusion, climate-smart agriculture, and urban planning. The focus group discussions helped identify challenges and ideate solutions to overcome roadblocks in community empowerment.

Session 1:

Member Presentations

Community-led climate actions

Cho Cho Shwe

Doh Eain Ltd, Myanmar

Doh Eain's 'Climate Adaptation Champions' initiative focused on empowering local communities to develop resilience strategies in response to climate challenges, especially amid ongoing political instability. The initiative highlighted key issues such as limited climate awareness, economic hardship and infrastructure deficits. To address these, Doh Eain advocates awareness campaigns, economic support, and infrastructure improvements while ensuring gender and social inclusion. The approach underscored the value of local knowledge, bottom-up strategies and youth involvement.

Farmers' resilience to climate vulnerability in Bhutan

Dr. Om Nath Katel

College of Natural Resources, Royal University of Bhutan

Bhutan has already faced extreme weather events like flash floods, wind storms, and crop diseases, leading to significant agricultural and infrastructural damage. The vulnerability of farmers in districts like Dagana and Wangdue was highlighted, with food security increasingly threatened due to declining agricultural productivity. Local knowledge and experiences were identified as vital for developing resilience.

Diversity and restorative assessment of fragmented cloud forest ecosystem in Bopaththalawa, Central Highlands of Sri Lanka

Mr. Gallage Palinda Madushanka Perera

Olu Water & Earth Lanka Youth Network, Sri Lanka

The presentation showcased a field study conducted by Palinda Perera of the rapid decline of Sri Lanka's cloud forests due to human activities like encroachment, tree felling, and agricultural burning. The cloud forests, vital for sustaining over 100 rivers, are also home to numerous threatened species. Conducted in Agarapathana, Bopaththalawa, the study involved biodiversity assessments, assisted natural regeneration, community engagement, fire prevention, and anti-poaching efforts. The study emphasised the importance of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in promoting sustainable practices.

Local community practices for securing water and adaptation

Dr. Chiranjibi Bhattarai

Nepal Water Conservation Foundation (NWCF)

The presentation explored the intricate link between water and climate changes in Nepal, a Country rich in fresh water. Nepal faced significant climate challenges, ranking 10th globally among countries most affected by extreme climate events from 2000 to 2019. The drying up of natural springs, the main water sources for hill and mountain communities, has reached alarming levels. Various adaptation practices have been implemented, such as the use of plastic ponds, rainwater harvesting, and traditional water management techniques. Future strategies proposed emphasised research, policy advocacy, technological innovation, and capacity building to improve water security and resilience against increasing climate impacts.

‘Plant Back Better’ – Working collaboratively across the DRR sector and beyond on Climate Smart Agriculture in Ati, Iloilo City, Philippines

Dr. Yanling Yee

National Science and Technology Center for Disaster Reduction, Taiwan

The presentation focused on collaborative efforts in climate-smart agriculture in Ati, Iloilo City, Philippines. The project brought together diverse stakeholders, including local communities, government agencies, educational institutions, and international s like the World Vegetable Centre. This collaboration was instrumental in integrating local knowledge with advanced agricultural practices to enhance community resilience against disasters. The initiative emphasised capacity building, particularly in disaster-resistant and climate-smart agriculture, while also revitalising local microeconomic activities.

Climate change adaptation for women cotton workers

Mr. Javed Hussain

Sindh Community Foundation (SCF), Pakistan

The presentation focused on the serious health risks faced by women cotton workers, including exposure to pesticides, prolonged sunlight, and extreme temperatures, leading to conditions like heatstroke and skin cancer. In response to this, the SCF has implemented several adaptation interventions including raising health and climate literacy among women cotton workers, engaging them in climate-resilient housing design, and providing alternate livelihood training to enhance economic resilience. The efforts have been recognized globally, with SCF receiving the Gender Just Climate Solution Award at COP27 in Egypt.

Use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge for adaptation strategy: Learnings from Northern Western Ghats, India

Dr. Y.D. Imran Khan

Watershed Organization Trust (WOTR), India

The presentation explored the significance of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in climate adaptation, focusing on the Northern Western Ghats. The WOTR, established in 1993 in Pune, has been instrumental in promoting community-based watershed management, climate-resilient agriculture, and ecosystem-based adaptation (EbA) in the region. Case studies highlighted the successful application of TEK in conserving biodiversity and managing community forest.

Local and decentralized climate action: Prioritizing adaptation over mitigation

Dr. Anjali Karol Mohan

Integrated Design (INDE), India

The presentation focused on the importance of integrating local knowledge and decentralised approaches into climate change adaptation efforts. Through various case studies, including projects in Dharwad, Bangalore, and Ranchi, the work explored the role of community-based climate action plans and the leverage of ecosystem services for urban poverty reduction and enhanced resilience. The strategic framework for Blue-Green Infrastructure in Bangalore was presented as a model for incorporating ecological and cultural elements into urban planning. The interventions proposed focused on creating socially just and adaptive spaces while ensuring preservation of ecosystem services.



Session 1:

Focus Group Discussion

During the focus group discussion, participants highlighted several effective strategies that have empowered local communities and indigenous people to integrate their knowledge into climate adaptation and resilience development programmes. These strategies, derived from the collective experience of the participants, underscore the importance of community-driven approaches in strengthening climate resilience and integrating indigenous knowledge into broader adaptation frameworks. The insights are summarised as follows:

What has worked?

- **Local Leadership and Co-Produced Research:**

Local communities acted as primary decision-makers, improving the relevance and effectiveness of outcomes. Joint research between communities and academics was crucial, supported by flexible funding.

- **Integrated Capacity Building and Knowledge Product Development:**

Capacity building in livelihood skills and job creation bolstered both sustainable development and community resilience. Developing knowledge product based on local solutions and experiences.

- **Empowerment and Inclusivity:**

Local communities were empowered as trainers, translating and contextualising climate science into local languages. A bottom-up, user-centred design approach that included youth and encouraged private-social partnerships.

- **Sensitization, Engagement, Flexibility:**

Effective sensitisation and timely engagement with stakeholders ensured greater alignment of funding with project activities. Flexibility was essential in adapting project deliverables and timeliness to meet community needs.

What has not worked?

- **Resource Gaps and Insufficient Collaboration:**

Insufficient understanding of community needs and limited resources have impeded effective knowledge transfer. Poor collaboration and understanding between scientists, policymakers, and communities, also proved to be significant barriers.

- **Financial and Operational Delays:**

Governmental and community resistance, along with delays in funding approvals and disruptions from extreme weather events, have significantly affected project sustainability.

- **Inadequate Engagement, Unrealistic Expectations:**

Insufficient stakeholder engagement and trust-building has failed to align community needs with official priorities. Unrealistic timeliness and expectations from funders have led to inefficiencies and delays.

- **Short-Term Approach Externally:**

Funding that lacks a focus on long-term sustainability has proven problematic. Disconnect resulting from short-term project focus and policy-implementation has undermined community accountability and engagement.

What can we do?

Enhanced Collaboration and Capacity Building:

Strengthen advocacy and policy development through transdisciplinary collaboration. Reinforce local adaptation practices in planning for scalable and equitable outcomes.

Generational Inclusion and Experience Sharing:

Promote sustainable practices through behavioural change and the involvement of younger generations. Foster a learning environment by sharing experiences and best practices.

Dynamic Projects and Flexible Methodologies:

Ensure projects are flexible and accessible, simplifying academic language for wider access. Adapt project methodologies, timeliness, and deliverables to suit varying contexts, emphasising clarity and simplicity.

Trust Building and Impact Visibility:

Build community trust by addressing immediate needs, irrespective of their direct climate change relevance. Make project impacts visible to stakeholders and align funders' priorities with community needs.

Finance Mechanism for LLA

The session concentrated on reviewing perceptions of existing funding mechanisms and the persistent challenges involved in securing financing for locally-led adaptation projects. The session provided valuable insights into strategies for mobilising resources in the absence of available funding and bridging the gap between funding providers and recipients.

Key Insights

- **Leveraging Existing Resources: Maximizing Impact without Additional Funds**
 1. **Local Governance Integration:** Incorporate climate resilience into local governance (e.g., India's Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)) to address challenges using existing resources.
 2. **Optimising Government Schemes:** Maximise the impact of existing government programmes to enhance climate. resilience without extra costs.
- **Unlocking Creative Financial Solutions**
 1. **Parametric Insurance Model:** Utilise parametric insurance for quick financial relief, offering scalable support to vulnerable communities.
 2. **Dedicated Adaptation Fund:** Create funds specifically for adaptation to ensure targeted financial support for local climate impacts.
 3. **Multi-stakeholder Collaboration:** Foster partnerships across sectors to pool re- sources and enhance adaptation efforts.
- **Securing Funding:Enhancing Access a empowerment**
 1. **Capacity Building:** Enhance local organizations' ability to craft strong funding proposals through targeted training.
 2. **Simplified Access:** Streamline funding processes to encourage broader participation and effective support.
 3. **Community Empowerment:** Provide technical training and credit access to empower communities, particularly women, in managing climate risks.

Additionally, the presentations highlighted successful projects executed by member communities, demonstrating their financial viability. The focus group discussions helped identify challenges in securing funding for these initiatives and to explore potential solutions.

Session 2:

Member Presentations

Utilizing developmental resources for resilience building through government Village Development Planning (GPDP) programme supporting LLA

Dr. Shiraz Akhtar Wajih

Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG), India

The work emphasised the importance of planning for and generating green resources to build resilience at the village level. A five-step process was outlined for incorporating environmental considerations into Gram Panchayat Development Planning (GPDP), which includes situational analysis, spatial identification of ecosystem services, visioning and prioritizing needs, identifying resources for protection and efficiency, creation of community awareness on the role of natural ecosystems and actions needed to restore them, and finally, drafting of an action plan for implementation.

Urban climate risk insurance: An overview; Financial inclusion: The credit cooperative lens

Mr. Chirayu Brahmbhatt

Mahila Housing SEWA Trust (MHT), India

The presentation focused on MHT's comprehensive approach to empower women in urban slums to adapt to climate change, particularly heat stress. Operating in seven cities across three countries, MHT supports women by providing technical training, financial products, and community-driven solutions. A key initiative is the creation of parametric insurance for excess heat, developed in collaboration with Global Parametric. This innovative insurance solution provides pre-determined payouts based on specific climate events. Despite challenges like onboarding local insurers and data validation, the programme has shown success, with 2,000 members in Ahmedabad receiving payouts during the pilot phase.

Session 2:

Focus Group Discussion

During the focus group discussion, participants highlighted the many roadblocks they had faced during the funding/financing of LLA. Drawing from their experience, different measures were proposed to address roadblocks from all sides. The insights are given below:

What do funders need to do differently?

- **Simpler Application Processes and Constructive Feedback Systems:**

Reform application processes to remove excessive technical jargon and complexity. Implement a constructive feedback system that allows recipients to receive inputs from funders.

- **Specific Funds, Integrated Approach:**

Create dedicated funds specifically targeted towards adaptation projects to ensure focused financial support. Foster synergy between adaptation projects and broader development goals to enhance sustainability and impact.

- **Overhaul Funding:**

Provide flexible funding options that can adapt to the evolving needs of adaptation projects. Develop a comprehensive framework for funders with clear guidelines and objectives to support effective funding practices.

- **Flexible, Shared, Long-term Approach:**

Introduce mechanisms to assess the long-term impacts of projects, for more effective allocation of funds. Promote joint funding initiatives to amplify the overall impact of adaptation efforts. More flexible project timelines to accommodate the varying scope of different projects, and unexpected challenges.

- **Local Focus:**

Ensure that funding is relevant to local contexts and respects the diversity of adaptation needs and strategies across regions. Allow proposals to be submitted in local languages to ensure inclusivity and better expression of local needs. Prioritise and support local initiatives that are driven by the communities directly affected by climate impacts.

What do local Organizations need to do differently?

- **Enhance Proposal Quality:**

Conduct capacity-building workshops focused on effective proposal pitching to improve the quality of funding applications. Applicants should clearly articulate how immediate adaptation needs will be addressed while charting out how long-term sustainability and resilience goals will be achieved.

- **Foster Collaboration:**

Emphasise the importance of collaborative efforts across different sectors and stakeholders for more robust and sustainable adaptation initiatives. Develop a holistic approach to adaptation that considers various perspectives and expertise.

- **Evidence-Based, Context-Aware Approach:**

Utilise evidence and data to build trust with funders. Invest in researching political pressures and economic conditions that impact adaptation funding and project feasibility. Develop proposals that clearly map out the specific local problems and propose contextualised solutions.

What are the capacity needs to do things differently?

Transparent and Reciprocity:

Encourage funders to publish their selection criteria, helping organizations align their proposals better with funders' objectives. Take responsibility for communicating project details and ensure reciprocal engagements.

Communication and Innovation:

Maintain open communication and transparency, to build trust and ensure effective information dissemination. Foster innovation and leverage social media for broader engagement and visibility.

Demonstrate Impact, Learn from Failures:

Develop mechanisms to effectively showcase project impacts through robust monitoring and evaluation. Aim for outcomes that address multiple challenges and learn from past failures to refine strategies.

Connections and Partnerships:

Form consortia to pool resources and enhance visibility to funders. Create inclusive programmes that address both urban and rural adaptation needs. Build partnerships at all levels to share knowledge, resources, and amplify impacts

Heat Hacks

Recognizing the critical need for adaptation and resilience to climbing temperatures, shifting climatic trends and extreme heat, the third learning journey identified by ARA member organizations for the Symposium was ‘Heat Adaptation - Water, Food & Energy Nexus.’ According to a review carried out by Transitions Research as part of the TLS program, only 15% of member organizations in the Asia-Pacific region are directly engaged in working on heat resilience and adaptation. This session aimed to foster ideation and greater collaboration between ARA members to make ongoing efforts on heat-related adaptation in the Global South more visible.

Key Insights

- **Value Addition through Peer Contribution**

The approach of individual reflection and peer contribution enabled the solutions emerging from the exercise to be more holistic, yet grounded in reality.

- **Reflection of Diverse Backgrounds and Perspectives**

Diversity in participants’ areas of expertise, and social and cultural backgrounds allowed for varied and unique perspectives and inputs. These were integrated and gaps bridged so as to develop multi-faceted, implementable solutions.

- **Incorporating indigenous and traditional knowledge with new technology and innovation for optimal solutions**

By leverage traditional knowledge and new research insights together, and bolstering these through peer learning, participants were able to co-create actionable strategies that can be implemented in vulnerable communities.

Member representatives shared their key research findings on heat-related policies and interventions. Also showcased were tools and technologies developed to assess local vulnerability, as well as case studies of piloting locally-led, nature-based solutions using indigenous knowledge to support both livelihoods and climate change adaptation. The activity session aimed to utilise member expertise for richer ideation and to devise practical solutions to heat-related challenges.

Session 3:

Member Presentations

Bridging the gap between science and policy

Ms. Tashina Madappa Cheranda,

The Center for Study of Science, Technology & Policy (CSTEP), India

CSTEP aims to enrich policy-making with innovative approaches, using science and technology for a sustainable, secure and inclusive society. The presentation showcased a range of tools developed by the organisation to assess climate risk and identify priority locations for intervention, such as Climate Atlas, which provides historical climate analysis and future climate projections at the district level for 28 Indian states, Diurnal Temperature Range tool, a web-based visualization tool on Google Earth, and the Heat Health Risk Index, to assess heat-related health risks. Research was also conducted to assess risk and exposure of photovoltaic solar panels in Maharashtra to identify climate risks to renewable energy assets.

Locally-led climate adaptation, indigenous knowledge, and heat adaptation: From practice to policy implications in Bangladesh

Mr. Abdur Rahaman,

Center for People and Environ (CPE), Bangladesh

An NGO dedicated to research and policy action in the areas of climate resilient development, CPE has taken up various initiatives to enhance resilience. The presentation showcased examples of on-ground interventions including piloted locally-led, nature-based solutions, the use of indigenous knowledge in water management, food storage and agriculture (e.g.. selected indigenous paddy varieties), contributing to more robust climate change adaptation, and mapping of zones at risk from extreme heat in the project area with suitable adaptation pathways also proposed.

Adaptation to extreme heat in India: Policy learning from the most vulnerable

Dr. Mihir Bhatt,

All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI)

An action-oriented organisation operational since 1995, AIDMI conducts research and tracks extreme weather events with across India and beyond, while currently focusing on urban micro businesses and rural family farms. The presentation highlighted key lessons and strategies for managing extreme heat in India, particularly focusing on the most vulnerable populations. These include the need for 'cool' funding lessons; effective demand-side funding and fund utilisation; filling data gaps and crossconnecting available data with decision-making processes; integrating monitoring and evaluation processes with project design, and nature-positive measures for adapting to extreme heat.

Session 3:

Robin Round Discussion

An activity session was conducted to encourage ideation, so as to improve potential solutions for heat adaptation, drawing on the collective expertise of participants. This exercise used the 15% solutions approach, wherein each participant provided one small-scale solution or ‘heat hack’ that could be implemented without using additional resources. Each ‘hack’ was further built/improved upon by peer participants by adding novel ideas, technical inputs, scaling strategies, and developed into comprehensive testable solutions.

The solutions proposed by participants varied in scale and scope, and centred on themes of food security, water accessibility, awareness of heat-related health impacts and precautionary measures, urban green infrastructure, urban planning and construction design, among others. An example of the process of building upon solutions through peer contribution is demonstrated in the box below:



Participant 1

Open windows to allow for regular ventilation and air circulation

Participant 2

Using eco-bricks or cooling bricks for building construction

Participant 3

Building design to ensure ventilation

Participant 4

Using transparent roofing sheets of the houses to utilize daylight.

Participant 5

Adoption of Mughal era architectural techniques in residences.

Participant 6

Advocacy for policy change in creating incentives for private developers who use green building materials that are coolers (e.g. compressed earth blocks)

Participant 7

Housing by-laws to deal with excess heat.

Participant 8

Awareness generation among contractors/builders to follow building regulations.

Participant 9

Trees for shade in vicinity

Participant 10

Water station for people, birds and animals.

Resulting from this example is a three-part solution for a selected residence at risk from extreme heat:

- Incentivise cool building construction and design, increasing energy efficiency
- Develop urban green infrastructure for external shade and cooling
- Ensure public access to water sources and hydration facilities

The above is just one example among the many innovative solutions that emerged from the pre-learning activity. The identified ‘heat hacks’ would be incorporated in the Heat Hacks Compendium, envisioned as a web-based, living repository of pilot ideas, case studies and resources on heat adaptation and resilience by the ARA community.

Resilience Metrics

In the emerging sector of climate change adaptation and resilience, the use of appropriately designed metrics to track progress and assess impact of initiatives is increasingly recognised as an essential practice. Beyond an exercise in transparency, it enables scaling of interventions and further, drive investments towards larger adaptation goals. However, there exist no universal standards of metrics or frameworks for assessing and measuring impact, and practitioners often have to rely on innovation and local contextualisation. Identifying this as a developing and significant area of work, ARA member organizations have prioritised ‘resilience metrics’ as the fourth learning journey of the TLS program.

Key Insights

- **Prioritisation of Social Inclusion and Equity Metrics**

Member organizations emphasised the need for main streaming metrics on gender equity and social inclusion as an important pathway to address vulnerability and adaptation needs.

- **Ensuring Data Access and Availability**

The need for local, regional, national and global institutions to collaborate and address data gaps identified in design and implementation of metrics.

- **Need for Contextualisation of Reporting Frameworks**

Creative reporting frameworks grounded in local context were proposed as beneficial in highlighting the resilience metrics aligned with local nuances.

- **Need for Appropriate Timeliness**

Adaptation and resilience interventions tend to have long timeliness for completion and visibility of results; given this, facilitators and funders should prioritise appropriate time allocation, so as to sustain the intervention in the long run.

Member representatives presented their findings on the gaps and uses of evaluation metrics in adaptation-related policies and action plans. They highlighted the need for greater transparency in benefit-sharing with communities, documenting their lived experiences and for actively involving them in decision-making. During the focus group discussion, participants discussed the drivers and indicators of success, usage of different types of frameworks, and gaps and challenges faced while using metrics and reporting mechanisms. They concluded by providing pointers/suggestions to be considered by global platforms.

Session 4:

Member Presentations

Resilience from the ground up: Our recent learnings on communities & urban climate resilience from Indonesia

Mr. Nayaka Angger Pradiptasiddhi,
Kota Kita

Two specific initiatives on integration of local knowledge and community participation with innovation were presented as case studies: Project 'Re Built' in Bali aims to explore local pathways to enable a transition from conventional carbon-intensive building materials to sustainably sourced nature-based materials. Kalibaru Hub, based in Jakarta, aims to up cycle shell waste by creating various products and handicrafts for sale and improve local livelihoods. Important learnings included the need for recognizing communities' lived experiences of a changing climate. Given how vulnerable areas tend to be hotspots for research and action, the presentation also called attention to increasing 'participation fatigue' among local communities subjected to similar initiatives by various organizations.

Gendered metrics framework on adaptive and resilient agriculture

Dr. Aditi Kapoor,
Alternative Futures

Providing examples of gendered metrics, Dr. Kapoor highlighted the correlation between local anecdotal evidence and scientific information as seen in West Bengal, and the higher engagement of women in farm-based activities such as weeding and threshing in Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh. Findings highlight gendered differences in access to farm income, land ownership, use of manual vs. mechanised tools, decision-making at household and community levels, as well as in access to and assistance from government programmes.

Bangladesh Perspective: Embracing internationality in SRHR and climate action for inclusive elucidations in policy

Ms. Tasnia Ahmed,
SERAC

SERAC conducted a review of the climate change-related risks faced by women in Bangladesh and identified displacement, lack of healthcare and education, and deteriorating women's sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) as some of the key threats. Crucial insights included reduced mortality due to investment in disaster management, and the need for gender-specific policies to address vulnerability of women to climate change.

Session 4:

Focus Group Discussion

During the focus group discussion, participants discussed the significance of impact measurement, particularly the types of metrics and effective methods of assessing the impact of implemented initiatives. They reflected on the gaps and challenges to be addressed through advocacy and collaboration. The session centred on three focused questions, with discussions held among five groups of four participants each. Some of the key insights emerging from the focus group discussion are mentioned below:

How do you define success in your work?

- **Evaluation, Replicability and Feedback:**

Results-based monitoring systems and formulation of logical baseline indicators to assess impact. Initiatives are regarded as successes when they are scaled up, adopted or replicated by other organizations, or receive positive feedback from stakeholders including local communities.

- **Policy, Institutional and Behavioural Change:**

Interventions that bring about changes in policy, adoption of interventions within partner organizations, or local/state/national governments, and behavioural change are regarded as indicators of success.

- **Long-term Sustainability:**

The continued functioning of an intervention post-implementation, sustained involvement of stakeholders, self-sufficiency of local communities in leading the intervention, are all regarded as indicators of success.

How do you see using resilience metrics in your work?

- **Risk Assessment, Usability, Dedicated Resources:**

Resilience metrics can identify factors influencing success/failure of intervention. Use of easily reportable metrics that can be used to assess status of implementation easily. Need for dedicated resources, as well as personnel specialised in usage of metrics and impact evaluation.

- **Project Management and Concurrent Process Monitoring:**

Ensures alignment of indicators, milestones and timeliness, while accounting for flexibility and modification. Integration of planning and deployment of metrics within project design.

- **Data Gaps and Evidence Documentation:**

Helps create baselines and improve on-ground data reporting systems to support government schemes and inform policies. Documentation of evidencing a mix of qualitative and quantitative indicators.

- **Stakeholder Inclusion, Contextual, Necessity-Based:**

Ensuring agency and participation of relevant stakeholders (donors, facilitators and communities) in the design and deployment of metrics. Evolving metrics that are aligned with the local context. In certain cases, use of metrics may not be viewed as necessary by stakeholders.

What do global platforms need to know?

Simplification and Contextualisation:

Reporting mechanisms should be simple and flexible enough to accommodate local nuances. In addition to ensuring inclusion of relevant local stakeholders, project intervention should consider the socio-economic, environmental and political context, and alignment with local belief systems for long-term success.

Appropriate Time Allocation:

Results from adaptation and resilience interventions can be time-intensive and have gradual visibility. Therefore, appropriate time allocation for project deliverables is essential for effective implementation.

Demonstrate Impact, Learn from Failures:

On-ground interventions for adaptation and resilience tend to be highly localised, necessitating a shift towards a bottom-up approach in decision-making.

Advocacy for Data Accessibility and Sharing:

The need for enhancing access and data sharing by governments, etc. to pre-empt bottlenecks in impactful interventions.

Conclusion

Key highlights across all four sessions conducted during the ARA-TLS Symposium in Bangkok, Thailand from 1st-2nd August 2024 are as follows:

- The importance of applying the lens of equity and social inclusion, especially with local communities as stakeholders in adaptation and resilience, was universally highlighted in the learnings and suggestions by individual member representatives.
- Along with in-person networking opportunities, the sessions provided a platform for collective problem-solving and peer learning, as compared to action-oriented research in silos.
- Member organizations expressed a need and interest in active collaboration among the ARA community and beyond for action-oriented research on adaptation and resilience.
- Member organizations collectively recognised the need for engaging funding organizations as a part of these thematic discussions.
- Collaborative discussions and knowledge exchange platforms such as these sessions increase scope for replicating and scaling interventions as suggested or implemented by individual member organizations.
- Such events also help bring about a shared sense of camaraderie among member organizations as part of the ARA community, which is important given that they need to face and overcome similar challenges.

Way Forward

Key highlights across all four sessions conducted during the ARA-TLS Symposium in Bangkok, Thailand from 1st-2nd August 2024 are as follows:

- Creation of a knowledge repository for ARA member organizations, as suggested by member representatives
- Planning further events and knowledge synthesis drawing from community engagement efforts
- Opportunities for start-to-end member engagement, with real-time updates on projects and planned interventions
- Synthesis of knowledge products from each of the four Learning Journeys along with integration of inputs by member representatives for further learning and engagement within the ARA community and beyond.

Appendix

Participants

No.	Name	Organization
1	Ms. Cho Cho Shwe	Doh Eain Ltd
2	Dr. Om Nath Katel	College of Natural Resources, Royal University of Bhutan
3	Mr. Gallage Palinda Madushanka Perera	Olu Water & Earth Lanka Youth Network
4	Dr. Chiranjibi Bhattarai	Nepal Water Conservation Foundation (NWCF)
5	Dr. Soundarya Iyer	RV University
6	Dr. Yanling Yee	National Science and Technology Center for Disaster Reduction
7	Mr. Javed Hussain	Sindh Community Foundation (SCF)
8	Dr. Y.D. Imran Khan	Watershed Organization Trust (WOTR)
9	Dr. Anjali Karol Mohan	Integrated Design
10	Dr. Shiraz Akhtar Wajih	Gorakhpur Environmental Action Group (GEAG)
11	Mr. Chirayu Brahmbhatt	Mahila Housing SEWA Trust (MHT)
12	Ms. Tashina Madappa Cheranda	Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP)
13	Mr. Muhammad Abdur Rahaman	Centre for People and Environ (CPE)
14	Dr. Mihir Bhatt	All India Disaster Mitigation Institute
15	Mr. Nayaka Angger Pradiptasiddhi	Kota Kita Foundation
16	Dr. Aditi Kapoor	Alternative Futures
17	Ms. Tasnia Ahmed	SERAC
18	Dilan Sampath Kumara	SEVANATHA Urban Resource Centre
19	Ericka Lynne Nava	Philippine Action for Community-led Shelter Initiatives, Inc.
20	Prerna Singh	Transitions Research (Organizers)
21	Abhipsha Ghosh	Transitions Research (Organizers)
22	Diksha	Transitions Research (Organizers)
23	Amita Basu	Transitions Research (Organizers)

Agenda

Time	Activity	Details
Day 1		
9:30	Welcome & ARA-TLS Introduction	
9:45	Ice Breaker Session	
10:00	Session 1: Understanding the Challenge: Indigenous and Local Knowledge Systems Nepal Water Conservation Foundation (NWCf)	
10:00	Member Presentations (Session 1)	Presentations by Cho Cho Shwe, Om Nath Katel, Gallage Palinda Madushanka Perera, Chiranjibi Bhattarai, Soundarya Iyer, Yanling Yee
11:00	Focus Group Discussion	
12:00	Lunch	
13:00	Member Presentations (Session 1)	Presentations by Javed Hussain, Y.D. Imran Khan, Anjali Karol Mohan
13:30	Session 2: A Big Piece of the Solution: Finance Mechanisms for LLAn	
13:30	Focus Group Discussion	
14:40	Member Presentations (Session 2)	Presentations by Shiraz Akhtar Wajih and Chirayu Brahmbhatt)
15:00	Tea/Coffee Break	
15:15	Session 3: Heat Hacks	
15:15	Group Solutions Exercise	
16:15	Member Presentations (Session 3)	Presentations by Tashina Madappa Cheranda, Muhammad Abdur Rahaman, Mihir Bhatt
16:45	Day 1 Wrap & Next Steps	
Day 2		
9:30	Recap of Day 1	
9:45	Session 4: How Do We Ensure We Are Doing it Right? : Resilience Metrics and Impact Assessment	
9:45	Dr. Chiranjibi Bhattarai	Presentations by Nayaka Angger Pradiptasiddhi, Aditi Kapoor, Tasnia Ahmed
10:30	Focus Group Discussion	
11:30	Session 5: ARA-TLS - Next Steps	

