



A Decade of Program Learning Series

Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP)

Without access to timely weather information, small-holder farmers and pastoralists are unable to plan and adapt to the effects of climate change, from severe drought to delayed rain, and even heavy rain and flooding, which can significantly affect their harvests and livelihoods. Households need to make appropriate livelihood decisions both in the short and long-term to become resilient in the face of climate uncertainty. Short-term decisions need to be based on reasonably accurate predictions of the upcoming growing season. Unfortunately, accurate weather predictions have not been available at the community level. Women in particular have valuable traditional knowledge and, as stewards of agro-biodiversity, have an important role to play in food security and climate change adaptation.

Participatory Scenario Planning is a mechanism for collective sharing and interpretation of traditional and scientific climate forecasts. The sharing of forecast information leads to agreement on early response action plan and contingency actions. These plans and actions respond adequately to the levels of risks and uncertainty that a community might face. The PSP process enables communities and meteorologists to explore potential forecast outcomes, their associated impacts and develop locally relevant action plans; helping communities effectively manage both the opportunities and risks of climate change and thereby increasing their resilience. In a workshop setting over two or three days, PSP brings together meteorologists, women and men community members, local government sector offices, research institutes and NGOs to

share their knowledge on weather and climate forecasts. The workshop creates space for sharing climate information from both local and scientific knowledge, discussing and appreciating the value of the two sources and finding ways to interpret the information that is locally relevant and useful. PSP is usually conducted as soon as seasonal climate forecast is available from meteorological services.

How we have been applying Participatory Scenario Planning

Through its PRIME Project, CARE Ethiopia promoted the implementation of the PSP process, building the capacity of the Regional Government to bring together pastoralist communities and the government twice a year to identify upcoming climate risks and hazards and make timely informed decisions. This blended forecast information is then shared more widely with the whole community, as Weather Advisories. These Weather Advisories are shared through local level community DRM committees, public meetings and also channeled to CARE's Social Analysis and Action (SAA) groups. The SAA groups focus on the gender impacts of climate information and allowed women and men to discuss how climate risks affect their different livelihood roles and responsibilities. PSP information was also combined with training on Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) through the use of Climate Change Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA), working with local and regional government staff, community members, and members of

Participatory Scenario Planning

1. Creates a common platform for climate communication, which respects, reviews and combines knowledge from communities (both women and men) and the scientific community;
2. Assists communities and local governments to agree on options, develop disaster preparedness plans and make climate-resilient livelihood decisions;
3. Promotes climate based information to improve disaster risk management preparedness and early response actions;
4. Promotes the integration of climate-resilient livelihoods and Disaster Risk Management into local government and community planning processes.

PSP recognizes that rural communities have an intimate knowledge and interaction with the climate at a local scale, as they go about their livelihood activities. This locally relevant knowledge and understanding is not available elsewhere.

natural resource management committees (50% of whom were women).

CARE's Livelihoods for Resilience Project introduced PSP to help address the lack of available accurate weather predictions. PSP forums are convened several times a year after a seasonal forecast is made available by meteorological services. These forums allow community members to contribute their local knowledge of the forecast in their area sharing their views on the current status of food security, vegetation cover, livestock condition and crop growth. Government sector services also contribute technical expertise on the implications of different forecast scenarios. This sharing of knowledge among communities, technical experts, and NGOs has enabled all stakeholders to better plan activities based on likely weather scenarios, capturing opportunities, mitigating risks and outcomes in agricultural production systems – crops and livestock, improving disaster risk reduction, adaptation, and resilience. Through participation in the PSP forums, meteorological services have also gained new credibility, relevance and value through enhanced communication with stakeholders and community audiences.

The PSP forums prepare a set of recommendations of practical actions that can easily be communicated to Village Economic and Social Association (VESA) members. Project frontline staff share climate advisories to VESAs so that members can jointly analyze and discuss the effects of climate change on their livelihoods. The VESA members make informed decisions about short-term locally relevant risk management strategies during every season, which is part of the process to enhance their anticipatory capacity.

Promising Practice. While CARE Ethiopia's PRIME Project ended in 2018, the PSP process is still operating today and is becoming institutionalized by government, other active NGOs and communities, as a climate information service best practice, to make timely and informed joint climate based livelihood management decisions. CARE PRIME signed an MOU with the Ethiopian National Metrology Agency to create local level weather stations, collect local weather data and set up automated weather stations.





The Spotlight: What we have learned

When driven by communities and local government, PSP is more likely to be integrated into community livelihood adaptation and local government development planning. More actions are identified where community members themselves hold the main responsibility, rather than government or other sources of support – a sign of increasing agency.

A gendered PSP process ensures that valuable community knowledge, information generation and information sharing from and with both women and men of different social groups, make an important contribution to understanding women's and men's capacity and vulnerability, which is essential for building gendered scenarios of how long term climate changes may impact communities.

Channeling climate information through SAA groups ensures the gender differences can be (are) understood and addressed appropriately.

Integrating CCA, CVCA and PSP in a coherent way helps build government and community capacity for anticipating and responding to climate change risks and impacts.

Linkage with existing committees/communication mechanisms such as community-based Early Warning Systems and Disaster

Due to the trust and collective process of the PSP, there was a stronger culture of preparedness at household and community levels amongst PRIME pastoral communities throughout El Niño. There was also a reduced loss of animals, with households able to gain better prices from their sale (selling when the animals were in good condition and when the price was higher, rather than during a drought when large numbers would be trying to sell their livestock too).

Risk Reduction strengthens the sustainability of the PSP process.

Increased community capacity to understand, use and benefit from climate information builds demand for the information. Timely access to and communication of seasonal climate advisories empower communities to take advantage of opportunities that climate presents - a key part of climate change adaptation.

Discussion on possible scenarios enables more flexible planning and risk management rather than treating a forecast as a guaranteed outcome. This is through developing plans that

make the best use of resources to improve livelihoods, while managing risks.

VESAs are an important platform for linking the PSP process outcomes (information). Members can make informed decisions about short-term saving strategies, locally relevant to risk management strategies based on joint analysis of climate change effects on their livelihoods; thus enhancing their anticipatory, absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities.

Promising Practice: CARE's Participatory (Climate) Scenario Planning process is being adopted by the GOE and NGOs alike, as a key practice for timely and informed climate information and joint decision-making.

Community knowledge, from women and men of different social groups, makes an important contribution to understanding past and current differential capacity and vulnerability, which can be useful for building scenarios of how long term climate changes may impact communities.



Want more information?

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To learn more about CARE's PSP© visit: <https://careclimatechange.org/practical-guide-to-participatory-scenario-planning-seasonal-climate-information-for-resilient-decision-making/>

To learn more about CARE's work globally visit www.care.org.

