



## Graduation with Resilience to Achieve Sustainable Development

GRAD is a five-year USAID-funded project designed to help the Government of Ethiopia find sustainable solutions to chronic food insecurity. The project supports households currently enrolled in the government's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) so that they may access microfinance, improve on- and off-farm productivity, and improve links to markets. In addition, GRAD improves household and community resilience by: increasing women's empowerment; improving nutritional practices; and introducing local climate change adaptation mechanisms. CARE Ethiopia leads a consortium that includes REST, ORDA, CRS, Agri-Service Ethiopia, SNV, and Tufts University. The project works in 16 districts in Amhara, Tigray, Oromia and SNNPR.

## **GRAD Learning Brief #2: The CVCA Process for Climate Change Analysis and Adaptation Action Planning**

**Why is GRAD prioritizing climate change adaptation (CCA)?** The principle of 'common but differentiated responsibilities' recognizes that different countries have different priorities in responding to the global challenge of climate change. For Ethiopia, where the impacts of climate change have significant impacts on efforts to promote poverty reduction and sustainable development, adaptation is the priority. GRAD households are food insecure and highly vulnerable to climate-related shocks and stresses. Climate change represents a significant threat to their ability to move out of poverty and graduate from PSNP. For these households, adaptation is the priority, and consequently GRAD is supporting actions that build their resilience to climatic shocks while also improving their capacity to adapt to longer-term changes in climate.

**The GRAD Strategy:** Recognizing the importance of resilience for food security and sustainable livelihoods, promoting CCA is an essential part of the GRAD strategy. To better understand the needs and priorities related to climate change in its target communities, GRAD adapted the Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA) methodology for participatory analysis of climate change vulnerability and adaptive capacity in project woredas. This analysis provided important learning for the project but, more importantly, served as a participatory tool that helped local institutions, communities and households better understand the nature of changing climate in their areas and helped with planning for appropriate adaptations.

**What we did:** The process described below has been conducted in each of GRAD's five operational areas..

- To launch the process, a two-day training of trainers was provided to senior staff from field teams. The training covered theoretical and practical concepts related to CCA and resilience, and guidance on CVCA implementation.
- Those trained then cascaded the training to project field teams and government partners.
- CVCAs were conducted in each woreda using participatory methods. The core of the process were focus group discussions with GRAD's VESA groups and separate groups of women and men. These discussions used tools including hazard mapping, historical timelines, seasonal calendars and a vulnerability matrix to gather community knowledge on climate and livelihood linkages.
- The field teams then developed impact chains to analyze the direct and indirect impacts of hazards on livelihoods and examine how people are currently responding to different impacts.

### ***The Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA) Handbook***

The CVCA Handbook describes a CARE International process designed to guide development and adaptation practitioners while they work with communities to analyze climate change impacts on their livelihoods as a basis for developing community-based adaptation plans. The Handbook also includes guidance on analyzing institutional and policy context at local and national levels. GRAD adapted and simplified the CVCA process to fit within a complex project design. The GRAD CVCA focused on understanding how hazards, particularly climate-related hazards, affect the livelihoods of women and men and explored how people are currently responding to these impacts and what changes in the climate and their environment the communities have observed. Using this information, the team worked with communities to identify opportunities and barriers for climate change adaptation.

To download the CVCA Handbook, please visit:  
[www.careclimatechange.org/cvca](http://www.careclimatechange.org/cvca)

- Building on the impact chains, adaptation pathways were developed, which identified appropriate interventions to help households manage the risks. The results of these analyses were validated with the community groups. VESAs were supported to create action plans for household and community activities.
- Finally, project teams created their own action plans, incorporating the promotion of appropriate CCA strategies in GRAD communities.



Example of Hazard Map from Debubawi, Tigray

**What it takes:** A two-person team, once trained, need about 14 person-days to facilitate the CVCA and action planning process. The exercise can be led by community facilitators,

who correspond in qualifications with Ethiopia's Development Agents. Beyond staff time, resources needs are limited to simple training materials and support costs. The CVCA has been shown to be a simple, cost-effective way to integrate CCA into food security programming.

**The Results:** GRAD assembled the products of its many CVCA exercises. The following were among the key findings and conclusions that resulted:

- GRAD communities are acutely aware of climate change. They describe changes in rainfall patterns, leading to increasing uncertainty in the timing and intensity of rainfall, as well as more frequent droughts.
- Because crop and livestock production are the primary sources of food and income in the GRAD areas, livelihoods are highly sensitive to climate variability and change.
- Communities identified drought, though infrequent, as the most significant concern, due to its devastating impacts on both crops and livestock. However, increasingly erratic rainfall is also a major concern.
- People are already adapting to the changes by planting early-maturing or drought-resistant seeds, diversifying their income sources and investing in savings, often with support from the project. These strategies provide a buffer when crops fail and/or livestock are lost.
- Measures such as water harvesting, small-scale irrigation and soil and water conservation actions are helping to mitigate impacts on critical resources such as water and agricultural land.
- Use of negative coping strategies, such as sale of firewood and charcoal and sale of livestock during crises when prices are low, are also still common. These are not sustainable and may actually undermine people's resilience for the future.

These insights are important for GRAD, which is using the analyses to raise awareness of climate change, its implications for livelihoods, and adaptation strategies. During group discussions, VESA members share their experiences and observations of climate change in their community, and discuss responses to the challenges. This often leads VESA members to develop CCA Action Plans, outlining how they plan to manage climate risks and minimize the negative effects on their livelihoods. With support from GRAD, VESAs are monitoring the implementation of these actions, sharing successes and lessons, and adjusting their plans accordingly.

### GRAD Learning

- The CVCA process not only provides critical information for project planning, but also serves as an effective awareness raising exercise for the communities involved.
- Participatory climate change analysis with communities provides important insights for planning adaptation actions and for helping communities to manage risks.
- The costs involved are reasonable and the process is within the capacity of NGO or government field staff.
- Confusion persists regarding the differences between adaptation and mitigation and both communities and field teams have difficulties selecting appropriate adaptation strategies.