

CARE tackles vulnerability to climate change



In Bangladesh, CARE supported women to plant kitchen gardens to increase the diversity of their food crops. Diversification is one of many important risk management strategies for climate change adaptation.

The challenge

People in many parts of the world are already feeling the impacts of climate change – including rising temperatures, changing rainfall and an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather. Though they have contributed the least to causing the problem, the world's poorest people will be affected most by climate change. This is a profound injustice.

There is no doubt that the international community must act quickly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the scientific evidence. However, it is equally important to help people contend with changes that are already occurring.

Adaptation to climate change is critical to sustainable development and will require action across multiple sectors at all levels. Poor households must be supported to adopt resilient livelihood strategies. Local government and civil society organizations must learn to analyse risks, plan for change and facilitate innovative approaches to adaptation. National governments must integrate climate change concerns into their development policies, plans and programmes. Stakeholders at all levels must prepare for increasing disaster risks. The international community must mobilise resources

for adaptation and ensure these funds reach those who need them most. To be effective, adaptation efforts must target the most vulnerable people and empower them with information, resources and opportunities for action.

CARE's response

Climate change is already destroying livelihoods and aggravating social inequities. Without urgent action, this could make it impossible for poor and marginalised people to attain a wide range of development and social justice goals. In response, CARE is working in partnership with vulnerable communities, local civil society and government authorities to:

- Implement targeted Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) programmes, and
- Integrate climate change adaptation in the design of development initiatives.

In order to maximize our potential impact, CARE is committed to contributing our experiences to global knowledge and learning on adaptation.

CARE & climate change
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Achieving food security is a growing challenge in many parts of Africa due to rising temperatures, changing rainfall and an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather. CARE's Community-Based Adaptation approach works with women and men in poor communities to ensure that they have a range of choices available to respond to this challenge.

Community-Based Adaptation in action

CARE's approach to Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) is people-centred. It focuses on empowering vulnerable people with the knowledge, skills and resources they need to take action on the climate change adaptation strategies appropriate for their lives and livelihoods. It is rooted in a participatory, comprehensive analysis of vulnerability that allows different groups – such as poor women or other marginalized people in the community – to identify targeted strategies based on their specific needs and priorities.

CARE sees CBA as a process involving four interrelated components:

- The promotion of climate-resilient livelihood strategies, including capacity building for planning and improved risk management;
- Disaster risk reduction;
- Capacity strengthening of local civil society and government institutions so that they can provide better support to communities, households and individuals in their adaptation efforts;
- Advocacy and social mobilization to address the underlying causes of vulnerability, such as gender-based inequality and poor governance.

Recognizing the importance of an enabling environment for effective CBA, our approach reaches beyond the local level. We also endeavour to influence policies at regional, national and international levels to create opportunities for community-based action on adaptation.

Together with our partners, CARE empowers poor and marginalised people to participate in decision-making processes at all levels to ensure that their rights and priorities are recognized.

Integrating adaptation into development

Climate change impacts can seriously affect development results, in some cases completely reversing any gains that have been made. At the same time, development projects can make a significant contribution to the adaptive capacity of target populations – if they are designed taking climate change into account. To increase the sustainability and impact of our poverty reduction programming, CARE is beginning to systematically integrate climate change adaptation into our work. We are focusing on sectors that are particularly sensitive to climate change, such as water, agriculture, livelihoods and health.

Contributing to global knowledge and learning

Given the scale of threat that climate change poses to global development and social justice goals, vulnerable communities, civil society and government authorities have much to learn about adaptation. Therefore, CARE is taking responsibility for documenting our experiences and contributing to the growing global knowledge base on adaptation.

Towards this end, we are developing practical tools to facilitate CBA and integrate adaptation into development projects. We are providing training to build the capacity of partner organisations to understand and address challenges posed by climate change responses. Along with our partners, we are engaging in learning networks to share experiences and lessons to ensure that the global community has the knowledge it needs to support the most vulnerable people in their efforts to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Learn more about our adaptation activities at: www.careclimatechange.org.