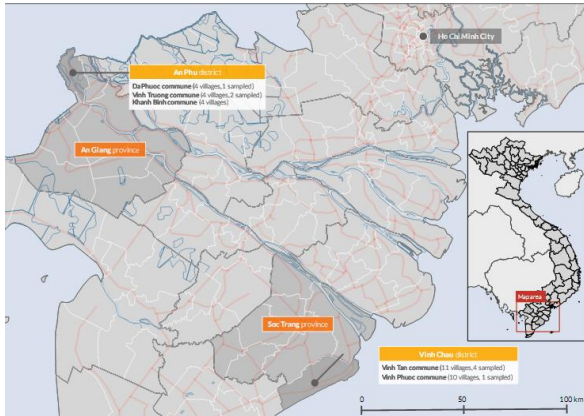




Vietnam Case Study

Inclusive Development: Strengthening Climate
Change Resilience in Vietnam

Map of project area



Map: Location of Integrated Community-based adaptation in the Mekong project (An Giang, Soc Trang provinces highlighted) highlighted (CARE)

Climate change in Vietnam

- Increased land and seas temperatures
- Extreme temperatures
- Extreme rainfall events
- Damaging cyclones
- Sea level rise.

Project goal

To increase the resilience of communities in the Mekong Delta to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

Key project outcome areas

- Livelihoods that are better able to adapt to climate change
- Disaster risk reduction that integrates climate change issues
- Stronger capacity within communities and civil society
- Local planning that is more inclusive and responsive to community needs and priorities.

PROJECT CONTEXT

“Remember, the storm is a good opportunity for the pine and the cypress to show their strength and their stability.”

Ho Chi Minh

The Mekong Delta is the lifeblood of southern Vietnam, known for its lush paddy fields and rivers. It provides the country with much of its rice and over 30 per cent of its food crop. However, the Delta is also a global hotspot for climate change. The

country’s economic growth and development achievements are under serious threat from seasonal changes in rainfall, flash flooding, increased intensity of flooding, and sea level rise. Over the past decade, CARE has worked in the Mekong to support community efforts to reduce disasters and adapt to climate change. In 2012, CARE began a new initiative to increase the resilience of communities in the Mekong Delta to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Over the next three years, the program worked with villages in two provinces – An Giang, a riverine and coastal area bordering Cambodia; and Soc Trang, a coastal area adjacent to the mouth of the Mekong – using a variety of strategies to build resilience.

PROJECT IMPACT

CARE supported communities build resilience through:

- **Promotion of climate-resilient livelihoods strategies.** CARE worked with communities members to support four main livelihood options: 1) bio-bedding for chicken-raising (a technique whereby chickens are raised on organic bedding and manure collected from chickens used to make bio-fertiliser; 2) bio-bedding for pig-raising; 3) indoor mushroom production; and 4) bio-fertiliser production. Other options implemented on a smaller scale included chilli and sprout bean cultivation, as well as small-scale trading and clothes production. These options were chosen because they: are more resilient to existing and future climate change; help communities diversify their livelihoods therefore spreading risk; require minimal input and are easy to implement; and have minimal impact on the environment (use less water and land; and reduce pollution).

- **Disaster risk reduction strategies** to reduce impacts of increasing climate-related natural disasters on vulnerable households. CARE worked with community members and local government to strengthen existing disaster risk reduction measures through the integration of climate change concerns in local plans. As a result, identified issues by communities were integrated into all five commune Socio-Economic Development Plans (the key mechanism for community development).
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- **Strengthening capacity** in community adaptive capacity. CARE conducted community-led, commune level assessments, which were used to inform community climate change adaptation plans and their implementation. The process of assessment, planning and implementation has provided community members with context specific knowledge and skills to adapt to climate change.
- **Local and national level empowerment, advocacy and social mobilisation.** CARE worked to strengthen civil society networking, collaboration and information sharing in the Mekong. For example, it supported the Southern Climate Change Working Groups, led several debates on climate change and disaster risk reduction, and held regular meetings on Mekong Delta issues to share and collaborate with others on advocacy efforts.¹ This has helped civil society build its knowledge base, increase collaboration, and influence the policy and enabling environment.

PROMISING PRACTICES



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Ma Rim, is a Cham woman from An Giang province. Living and working on the rivers for decades, being affected increasingly by volatile weather: life has not been easy.

Alongside numerous Cham women, in September 2013, Ma Rim joined one of the many village climate change adaptation meetings organised by CARE together with the local Women's Union. During these meetings, the women enthusiastically discussed past, current and future weather and climate trends, how they impacted their daily lives and community in different ways and what people could do about it. "Participating

in these exercises was fun but has also taught me a lot about how and why the weather changes so much lately and how my village will be affected," says Ma Rim. "Since we had that meeting, I now know what to do and I listen more frequently to weather forecasts."

The village meetings also had an encouraging impact. "As an ethnic Cham woman, I have not previously been able to join these community meetings – and missed out on a lot of information. In the past, Cham women were always staying at home and not going to school. We were told what to do by our husbands."

Fortunately, things are changing for the better and meetings such as the ones supported by CARE are contributing to this change. Ma Rim confirms, "It's been very helpful for all of us Cham women. Now Cham men and women are more equal and I am more involved. I value the importance of knowledge and education much more which I will carry on to my children."

‘Supporting Women to Adapt’

“Any serious shift towards more sustainable societies has to include gender equality.”

Helen Clark (UN Administrator)

CARE is well known for its participatory and gender-sensitive approach to development. This project was no different: through the use of participation and gender-sensitive programming, meaningful and active involvement of community members, partner organisations and government was created. In particular,

CARE worked at a community level to ensure that women, especially ethnic minority women, were able to actively participate in the program and affect decision-making.

One practice used in the project to support the achievement of gender-sensitive goals, was the development and implementation of a Gender Action Plan. This plan formed the backbone of action to promote gender equality, and ways to measure progress. The plan included the following measures;

On-going investment in multi-faceted capacity building:

- CARE ensured a gender balance in CBA trainers and facilitators (province, district, commune), with representatives across different organisations (88 people in total, of which 43 were male, 45 female and 32 from ethnic minorities)
- CARE provided specific training for trainers and facilitators on gender, gender-responsive facilitation skills, as well as the integration of gender issues into other topics
- CARE organised an annual sharing and learning event, with specific sessions and documentation on gender.

Gender balance in activity implementation arrangements:

- CARE ensured that there was gender balance in all its activities
- CARE held separate sex focus group discussions, facilitated by men (for men’s group) and women (for women’s group) to ensure that men and women had equal voice
- CARE encouraged both male and female participants to speak equally in plenary discussions
- CARE ensured the times and locations of meetings and their venues were suitable for both men and women to maximise participation.

Gender-sensitive CBA planning tools for village CBA planning:

- CARE integrated gender issues and questions into all its CBA planning tools
- CARE staff and partners reflected on differential needs and capacities after each exercise of the CBA planning
- Formats of action plans and CBA planning reports clearly reflected gendered needs and capacities and aim to capture gender analysis
- CARE shared reports made on the planning process with key CBA decision makers in the commune and district to ensure they recognise the importance of gender considerations in planning processes.

As a result of this work, communities and local authorities have improved capacity to undertake gender-sensitive analysis and planning for CBA and DRR, and civil society (in particular, the project’s partner, the Women’s Union) has a solid foundation for the scale-up of community based, equitable and gender-sensitive adaptation in the Mekong Delta.

EMERGING LESSONS

- **CARE's CBA Framework highlights the need for projects and programs to include women's empowerment and gender as central components.** This provides the opportunity for gender and women's empowerment to become major drivers of efforts to build community resilience in CARE's projects and programs.
- **Participatory and gender-sensitive approaches to development can help to ensure that adaptation outcomes** do not exacerbate existing inequalities and vulnerabilities, and that they fulfil the needs and priorities of women and girls.
- **The use of gender analysis, alongside other types of power and vulnerability analysis** (for example the Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis) in the planning phase, as well as gender-sensitive indicators and tools for monitoring gender-sensitivity in projects, helps support community-based interventions that are more effective, equitable and sustainable.
- **Activities designed specifically for women increase their adaptive capacity but also perception of self-efficacy.** Working with women to identify key issues through commune level assessments and CBA planning, and specific targeting of women in livelihood support and development of 'women-led' models, disaster risk reduction activities, and awareness-raising activities has helped women increase their knowledge and skills to improve their everyday lives, but also to have the confidence to speak out about issues important to them.

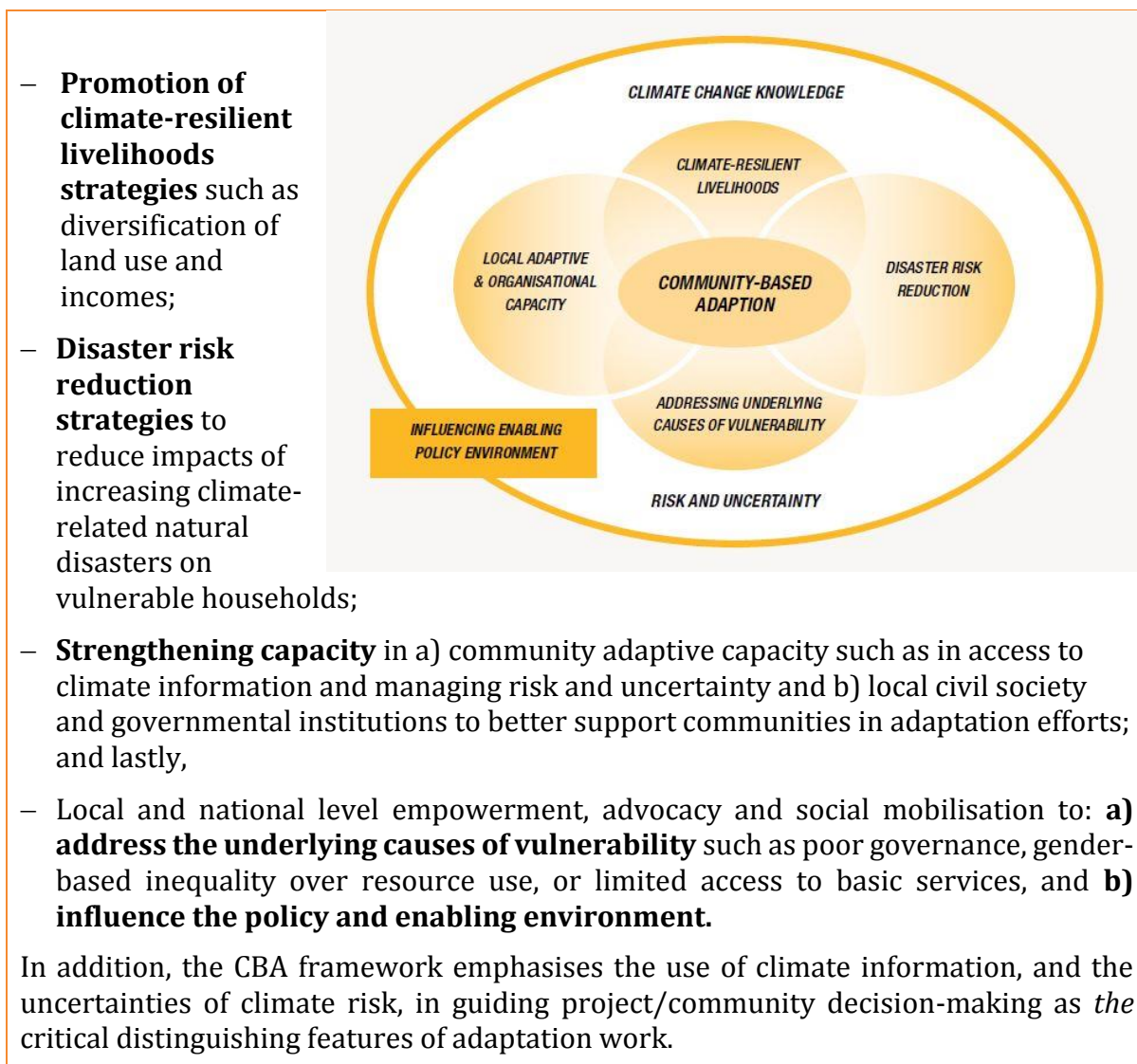
Glossary

Community-based adaptation (CBA): Interventions whose primary objective is to improve the capacity of local communities to adapt to climate change. Effective CBA requires an integrated approach that combines traditional knowledge with innovative strategies that not only address current vulnerabilities, but also build the resilience of people to face new and dynamic challenges.ⁱⁱ

Adaptive capacity: The ability of a system (individual or community to adjust to climate change (including climate variability and extremes) to moderate potential damages, to take advantage of opportunities, or to cope with the consequences.ⁱⁱⁱ

Resilience: The capacity of an individual, household, population group or system to anticipate, absorb and recover from hazards and/or effects of climate change and other shocks and stresses without compromising (and potentially enhancing) long-term prospects.^{iv} Resilience is not a fixed end state, but is a dynamic set of conditions and processes.^v

Diagram 1: CARE's Community-Based Adaptation Framework^{vi}





This case study is one of a series from CARE's community-based adaptation (CBA) projects in Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu and Vietnam. The purpose of these case studies is to highlight and provide examples of the practical application of CARE's CBA framework.

CARE implemented these projects between July 2012 and June 2015 with funding from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) under its Community-Based Climate Change Action Grants (CBCCAG) program.

The paper was authored by Charlotte L. Sterrett of Climate Concern. www.climateconcern.net. It is based on the end-of-program evaluations conducted by Charlotte L. Sterrett, Patrick Bolte and Dennis Euker and other project materials.

The views in this paper are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent those of CARE Australia, its partners or the Australian Government.

The paper would not have been possible without the assistance of Sarah Boxall, and information provided in the evaluations reports authored by Patrick Bolte and Dennis Euker. Thanks must also be given to all participants in each of the individual project evaluations for their kind consideration and involvement.

ⁱ Bolte, P. (2015) *Adaptation: addressing adversity*. Final Evaluation of the project "Integrated community-based adaptation in the Mekong Delta Region (ICAM)". Vietnam. CARE, p.14

ⁱⁱ CARE (2010) *Community-Based Adaptation Toolkit*. Version 1. CARE International, p.6.

ⁱⁱⁱ IPCC (2000) 'Glossary of Terms used in the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report WGII'. Geneva, Switzerland.

^{iv} Turnbull, M. & Sterrett, C. L. (2013) *Toward Resilience: A Guide to Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation*. Emergency Capacity Building Project, p.160.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} CARE International (n.d.) *Framework of Milestones and Indicators for Community-Based Adaptation*. CARE International.