

Integrated Community-based Adaptation in the Mekong (ICAM) Evaluation

Joint CARE Vietnam/CARE Australia Management Response

No.	Recommendation	Status (Agreed/ Agree-in- principle/ Disagree)	Management Response
Key Recommendation A: Re-frame community-based adaptation			
A.1	Integrate natural resource management into the CBA framework	Agree-in-principle	<p>CARE agrees that the integration of natural resource management (NRM) in community-based adaptation (CBA) initiatives is good practice. CARE globally and CARE in Vietnam are aware of this need for integration and have been implementing integrated NRM-CBA programming for a decade in various projects (e.g. watershed management; mangrove plantation and management).</p> <p>In discussions with partners, the ICAM project explored opportunities to integrate NRM into interventions on livelihood and disaster risk reduction (DRR) through approaches such as drip irrigation, reduced groundwater pumping, water conservation techniques, floating gardens and mangrove nurseries. However, analysis of these options found that they were either not cost-effective or already supported by other organizations. This, combined with the fact that the ICAM project was recognised as ambitious within the project timeframe, led to a decision not to pursue these NRM options.. While not a focus of the project, ICAM did integrate NRM into the participatory action orientated training (PAOT) campaign and DRR activities (such as tree planting for preventing river bank erosion). NRM was also explored within the CBA plans.</p> <p>In terms of integrating NRM more formally into CARE’s broader CBA Framework, CARE Australia will feed this suggestion into CARE’s Poverty Environment and Climate Change Network (PECCN), who are best placed to consider this in light of CARE’s work on adaptation globally.</p>
A.2	Apply a layered approach to beneficiary support	Agree-in-principle	Overall, CARE makes a conscious choice to tackle underlying drivers of vulnerability as part of its CBA work, so in ICAM we primarily focused on supporting the poor and

			(later on) the near-poor. In addition, the entire community benefited from CBA planning, DRR initiatives, awareness raising through participatory action-orientated training, and strengthened Government capacity in CBA and DRR. In terms of livelihoods, ICAM also encouraged replication by the non-poor by providing them with information on the successful livelihood models, but not giving direct support. Still, as non-poor have more resources and better access to private sector and Government support and services, targeting the near-poor and poor should remain CARE's priority, especially in a context of Vietnam.
A.3	Support existing adaptive mechanisms	Agreed	This is generally a standard element of CARE's approach.
Key Recommendation B: Strengthen the organisation underpinning			
B.1	Allow more time and resources for the CBA approach to succeed	Agree-in-principle	The ICAM project was ambitious and complex in design, particularly on CBA planning within 3-year time frame. The project was designed to have a phased approach, starting with participatory community-based assessments to identify appropriate livelihood options, then testing these options before scaling them up. CARE recognizes that this time-consuming approach, while good practice, was in reality not feasible in the short time-frame of the ICAM project. The incongruence of objectives with time and resources should have been reconciled by either extending resources, reducing targets and changing the approach. Ultimately, the phased approach taken in ICAM resulted in limited time available for consolidation and scale-up of the new climate resilient livelihood models introduced by the project. This is a key lesson learned from ICAM and CARE recognizes that activity planning would be improved by scheduling multiple interventions to happen simultaneously.
B.2	Ensure that technical expertise is sufficient to guide climate-resilient livelihoods	Agree-in-principle	CARE agrees that technical expertise is needed to guide climate-resilient livelihoods. ICAM was supported by two Climate Change Advisors – one international and one national. A number of technical resources on climate change adaptation (including livelihoods) were developed by the project including Making It Count , a practical guide to integrating gender into climate change and disaster risk reduction projects; and Action Research on Climate-resilient Livelihoods for Land-poor and Land-less People which published the findings from ICAM's extensive research into climate resilient livelihood options. ICAM made efforts to transfer technical expertise and practical experience to local partners and a broader audience through training, mentoring and significant

			<p>investment in documentation. ICAM's final Impact Assessment found that the project would have benefited more by mobilizing technical expertise existing in official government structures (including within the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and agricultural extension services) in addition to the partnership with the Vietnam Women's Union.</p> <p>In our ongoing work in Vietnam, CARE will continue to work with local partners to develop their technical capacity to implement project activities.</p>
B.3	Deploy bigger teams capable to coach	Disagree	<p>In Vietnam, CARE works through local implementing partners to build local capacity and support the development of Vietnamese civil society. Key to this approach is the need to support and develop the capacity of partners. A bigger CARE team is not necessarily the best answer to this, as we also need to consider optimal team structure, and the involvement and role of local partners. Recognising that ICAM was an ambitious design, our lesson for the future would be review the proposed scope of new projects; ensure that a sound capacity needs analysis is conducted with local implementing partners at the beginning to identify where there are strengths and areas for improvement; and use this to inform implementation plans, capacity building activities, and any necessary adjustments to team roles, structure and size.</p>
.Key Recommendation C: Revisit the implementation mode			
C.1	Start field-level implementation sooner to boost community engagement	Agree-in-principle	<p>It took time to analyse and agree on the findings from CVCA/CBA assessment and livelihood studies to inform the implementation of the resilient livelihood strategies. This approach has slowed down the implementation in the field and left less time for field-level implementation that would boost community engagement, especially given time for coaching in climate change resilient livelihoods. Going forward, CARE will look to implement "no regret" activities early in the implementation phase to maintain community engagement with the project.</p>
C.2	Focus on groups (rather than individuals) and use them to spread coverage	Agree-in-principle	<p>The scale of project may allow to work with both groups and individuals. In the cultural context of Mekong delta, the individual may play an important role of motivating and inspiring others in the group, while the group may help to keep the project knowledge and leverage the impacts</p>
C.3	Monitor to manage	Agree	<p>CARE agrees that we need to monitor to manage. This was the approach we sought</p>

			<p>to take in ICAM but we acknowledge there are areas for improvement. The project was ambitious so time pressures sometimes challenged our ability to monitor, identify and react the arisen issues with a management solution. There was also active communication among CBCCAG and DFAT to reach agree on the solution to issues arising and a no-cost extension for promulgating good practices and lessons learned from the project.</p> <p>At a whole of portfolio level, CARE Australia has been looking across projects in a systematic way through Country Portfolio Discussions, with MEL frameworks being one of the key focus areas. Areas for improvement are being identified, which will guide future training and planning.</p>
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