



Independent Evaluation of the Africa Climate Change Resilience Alliance Phase 1 Executive Summary

This report is an independent evaluation of the first phase of the Africa Climate Change Resilience Alliance (ACCRA). The first phase of ACCRA ran from November 2009 to November 2011 and was operational in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Uganda. ACCRA aims to increase governments' and development actors' use of evidence in designing and implementing interventions that increase communities' capacity to adapt to climate hazards, variability and change. ACCRA is a consortium made up of Oxfam GB, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), Save the Children Alliance, CARE International and World Vision International and funded by DFID. ACCRA is organised around four programme components: The Local Adaptive Capacity (LAC) framework, capacity-building work, in-depth research and working and learning with others.

The aim of this evaluation was to assess ACCRA's achievements to date and focused on four areas: The programme's outcome and impact; relevance of the programme; ways of working and learnings from advocacy. Field visits were undertaken in Ethiopia, Mozambique and Uganda with a total of 103 persons canvassed for the evaluation.

1. The programme's outcomes and impact

Overall, this evaluation has found that the ACCRA programme has made significant achievements reaching and in some cases, going beyond the objectives set. Given the modest budget and team and the relatively short time, it could be said that ACCRA has been "punching above its weight".

This executive summary is part of an independent evaluation of ACCRA, covering the first phase of the programme from November 2009 to November 2011. The evaluation was undertaken by a team of consultants from Owl RE, a Swiss-based evaluation consultancy. See <http://community.eldis.org/accra/> to find out more about ACCRA and to subscribe to our monthly update.



What have been results of the ACCRA to date?

Understanding of the value in linking CCA, DRR, social protection and livelihoods interventions - and engagement (logframe target: 4, evaluation assessment: 4)

ACCRA's research process, capacity building and awareness raising activities have all contributed to an increased understanding of the value in linking climate change adaptation (CCA) to disaster risk reduction (DRR), livelihoods and to a lesser extent, social protection interventions. Overall, the level of understanding was found to be higher amongst government officials rather than consortium agency staff (evidently those working closer to the programme had a better understanding). However, in all three countries ACCRA has been primarily perceived as a climate change project. Increased understanding amongst government officials has also led to awareness of the need for better coordination between sectors. Respondents from consortium agencies thought that ACCRA had contributed to better understanding and it had started to lead to a more integrated approach of CCA into their DRR and other programmes. Field level consortium agency staff and local governmental officials interviewed for the evaluation varied in their ability to directly apply their increased understanding to their practical work.

Use of evidence generated by ACCRA to influence consortium agencies and networks – and engagement (logframe target: 4, evaluation assessment: 3.5)

Examples were found where ACCRA has influenced consortium agencies and networks such as the reviewing of DRR/CCA national strategies, attracting funds for new initiatives and better coordination between relevant projects. Differences were seen between the levels of influence between agencies, with impact greater amongst those programmes directly involved with ACCRA. At this stage, some initial steps to integrate ACCRA's findings into international initiatives and broader policies were seen, but it also has to be taken into account that the main research findings had just been released at the time of the evaluation. The ACCRA programme had also positively influenced programme design, policy work and understanding of adaptive capacity at the regional and international level of agencies, notably with the LAC framework.

Modification of government plans and budgets as a result of ACCRA generated evidence (logframe target: 3, evaluation assessment: 3)

Through the research process, capacity building and influencing strategies, ACCRA has influenced to some extent relevant policies and processes at the national level and is well positioned to exert influence in the future. More significant than policy influence at this stage has been ACCRA's role in bringing together the different key government institutions responsible for DRR and climate change. In all three countries where it was active at the local level, ACCRA has positively influenced the planning process to integrate further CCA elements. No major shift was observed in government budgets, although ACCRA influenced the more efficient use of current and future funds and supported governments in attracting more funds for CCA and resilience.

ACCRA has attracted the attention of donors at regional and national levels to a limited extent. Positively, the initial work of ACCRA has attracted additional funding (notably from the DFID-supported Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN)).

The regional ACCRA meeting in Nairobi of September 2011 was also successful in raising the influence on international actors.

What were the major factors influencing the achievement or not of these results?

The following supporting factors were identified: A favourable policy environment; a multi-pronged programme; availability of extra funding and the general consensus on ACCRA's objectives and goals amongst consortium agencies; strong coordinators making a substantial impact to programme outcomes.

The following constraining factors were identified: Working in disaster-prone countries; issues with non-implementation of policies; the short term nature of non-government organisations' (NGOs') project cycles and human resources issues.

Are there any additional results, beyond those expected in the logframe (in-country and internationally)?

The following additional results were identified: Capacity building among partner institutions; bringing NGOs and government closer together; increasing awareness of participatory research and planning; increasing planning skills at the local level and interest in replication of ACCRA outside Africa (notably in the Pacific).

Is ACCRA making any difference in as far as the impact of the project is concerned?

The foreseen long term impact of the programme – that vulnerable people are more resilient to climate change – has been central to the activities. In phase 1, ACCRA has contributed towards this impact more directly through its activities at the district level. In addition, it should be recognised that there are other NGOs, United Nations agencies and government initiatives working towards this same goal.

2. Relevance of the programme

How relevant and appropriate is the programme for the 3 ACCRA countries?

CCA was clearly seen a priority for governments, consortium members and other NGOs within each of the three countries. ACCRA has reinforced an already increasingly strong focus on climate change and contributed to making adaptation and resilience part of the discussion. It was generally felt that ACCRA was of strategic importance to consortium agencies since they were increasingly adopting an integrated approach to cross-cutting issues like climate change.

To what extent are the objectives of the programme still valid?

The focus of the first phase was on undertaking research and building relationships with governments. Therefore, building capacity with local and national governments; strengthening the initiatives of consortium agencies; influencing donors and civil society (CS); and opportunities to encourage learning across countries were elements of the objectives found to be particularly valid for phase 2.

Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with its overall goal? (Credibility, quality, relevance and accessibility of outputs)

This evaluation has found that the main activities of ACCRA have all contributed to its overall goal. Indications for this were found in all three countries. The question that can be posed is rather if the balance between these activities and outputs was appropriate.

LAC Framework: The framework has proven to be a credible and quality output of the programme. However, the framework remains for many operational staff a theoretical concept. There was an expectation from some stakeholders that in phase 2 the LAC framework would be developed into a more practical tool.

In-depth research: The heavy focus on research and the workload it created during the first phase of ACCRA has been questioned, especially by consortium agency staff and some international stakeholders. A main concern expressed about the research was the ability of local researchers to analyse the data and bring it together in a report format of high quality. For this reason, ACCRA's research partner, the ODI had to take an unforeseen role. The policy and country briefs released to date were considered to be of a high quality although in terms of accessibility, some agency staff found them too academic and difficult to translate into recommendations for their programmes. Many respondents suggested that the focus in phase 2 should be on making the most out of the research findings already generated and any new research should be balanced with other activities.

On the other hand, governments appreciated the research, being the first of its kind to provide detailed compilation of communities' perceptions' on the impacts of climate change and how development work has contributed towards enhancing communities' ability to adapt. Governments indicated they were trying to use the findings as baseline information for planning and also policy /strategy development at different levels.

Capacity building work: In phase 1, it is arguably this activity component that has had the most significant impact to date in-country, particularly at the local level. The challenge for phase

2 will be to find the correct formula for this activity to continue successfully. The additional funding from CDKN supported involvement of government central/regional personnel. Capacity building has led to concrete outcomes in terms of new integrated planning routines, local action plans and generated interest from other districts and higher level government. The experience sharing between the three ACCRA countries was seen as valuable by government staff. Capacity building was considered very relevant by governments and gave the programme considerable credibility.

Working and learning with others: The country coordinators have dispensed considerable efforts to establish an inclusive programme involving the relevant government institutions and the consortium agencies. In all three countries, the programme has been successful in achieving the goal of building these relationships. Further, the development of influencing strategies in each country has led to a focus also on starting to influence prior to the release of the main research findings which proved an astute move given what has been achieved to date in policy influence. ACCRA had created a communications strategy and although major activities were undertaken, without an internal/external support for communication activities the ACCRA team could not undertake all planned actions.

Is ACCRA doing what it said it would do?

Based on the programme logframe and the original programme narrative, ACCRA has undertaken what it planned to do when considering the activities as described above. There have been some delays in activities (notably the research component) but the programme, its donor and consortium agencies have shown flexibility in adapting the programme when necessary.



Uganda: Charcoal production is a major source of supplementary income for communities in Kotido, particularly during times of hardship

3. Ways of working

Activity	Suggested improvements
LAC Framework: The main work on this activity has been completed given that the resource is available and there is evidence that it was beginning to be used in-country and at the international level.	Two suggested improvements for phase 2 would be in promotion and in the extension of the LAC framework into an operational tool.
In-depth research: The main research component was planned for phase 1. Any research in phase 2 needs to take into consideration the issue of quality of local researchers. Further, the heavy workload that research creates for country coordinators should be considered.	For research planned in phase 2, the role of the research partner would need to be reviewed with more involvement in the research process or another approach adopted, i.e. less academic. Any new research should be carefully considered given its time-consuming nature and balanced with other activities. The already rich and “to-be-exploited” quantity of research that ACCRA has from phase 1 needs to be taken into account.
Capacity building work: In phase 1 this activity proved to be one of the more successful based on the results seen. In phase 2, the capacity building approach needs to be further refined and go hand-in-hand with the advocacy activities. Approaches may differ in the different countries but a focus on building capacity at the local (district/provincial level) would seem appropriate.	Refine further the capacity building approach, adapted as necessary per country. An issue to be faced is how can successful pilot projects for capacity building be scaled up from one district to more?

Structure: From what the evaluation team has seen, the ACCRA programme has been flexible in adapting to the different needs and contexts of the three countries. In Ethiopia and Mozambique the coordination between agencies has been less regular and at the time of the evaluation, government representatives in Ethiopia had not been involved in formal steering committee meetings, though due to the secondment, Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector (DRMFSS) of the government was updated on a weekly basis about the project’s activities.

Suggested improvement: Consideration should be given to establishing an ACCRA steering committee in Ethiopia which would give government more ownership over the programme.

Coordination and management: ACCRA has benefited from strong country coordinators in Uganda and in Ethiopia (and more recently in Mozambique) and in all countries the programme was often directly associated with its coordinator. There was a potential risk in having the programme too much associated with one individual. ACCRA national teams have been reinforced with local capacity building advisors. Even so, the coordination, advocacy work and day-to-day running of ACCRA is a full time job and a part time position as in Mozambique or the 3 day/week secondment to the government as in Ethiopia are not ideal solutions – neither for the programme or for the concerned staff members. The issue was also raised as to what would be the role of agency focal points within phase 2, given the foreseen focus on advocacy and integration of research findings within agency programmes and projects.

Suggested improvements: Review the role of agency focal point for phase 2, keeping in mind the importance of these persons to the overall impact and integration of ACCRA into programming. Support should be maintained for administrative and communication tasks. Ensure full time positions of

ACCRA country coordinators (while maintaining the successful secondment strategy in Ethiopia).

4. Learning from advocacy work

Approaches to advocacy

To be able to exert influence, ACCRA has employed a number of advocacy strategies:

Raising awareness about the ACCRA programme within the three countries and internationally; building relationships and trust with government; ensuring engagement of higher level government officials; demonstrating of value through pilot projects; linking up with influential stakeholders; building influence without the evidence-base.

Advocacy approaches to be explored

The following are not “least successful” advocacy approaches but more so approaches to be refined or re-considered for the programme: Explaining the concepts of climate change and CCA; drawing further policy recommendations from the research; increasing visibility of ACCRA within countries; integrating with climate change advocacy strategies of the consortium agencies.

Conclusions and recommendations

The following table summarises the key conclusions and consequent recommendations to feed into the development of phase 2 of the programme and broader initiatives:

Conclusion	Recommendation
<p>A. Programme design: The evaluation design was broad enough to include different components that have contributed to the set goals. In retrospect, ACCRA has shown that influencing and impact was possible before a major body of research findings was ready. Was the large scope of the research component necessary in order to have the desired influence? Would a smaller research component have been sufficient? Would it have been enough to undertake an analysis of the projects based on the LAC framework and project documentation? Is it research that will make the most impact with governments? Consider the focus of the CARE Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP) on using video and storytelling as influencing tools combined with research. If ACCRA is re-produced elsewhere (as planned in the Pacific), a “lighter” version could be considered: Centred on capacity gap analyses as the main research tool matched with capacity building initiatives.</p>	<p>In designing similar programmes to ACCRA, consider carefully the scope of the research component considering also what are the most effective influencing strategies for the given targets.</p>
<p>B. Policy influence of ACCRA: The cornerstone of ACCRA is to influence policy. This evaluation has found that ACCRA has already made progress in this respect, particularly with Disaster Risk Management (DRM) policy and is well placed for future influence. At the national level, the focus on DRM is understandable but other relevant areas such as agriculture and gender policies should not be forgotten, in addition to linking into the central processes, such as the central planning mechanisms (as planned in Uganda). As highlighted in this report, policy implementation remains an issue and the work undertaken at the district/provincial level by ACCRA has proven to be important and “impactful” – even if on a small scale.</p>	<p>For policy influence, keep in mind other relevant areas and the central processes of government while focusing on policy implementation, possibly through initiatives at the district/provincial level.</p>
<p>C. Strengthening initiatives of agencies: Another cornerstone of ACCRA is to strengthen initiatives of consortium agencies in CCA. This could prove to be one of the most challenging aspects of phase 2. Feedback from agency staff indicated that they would need support in this aspect as many were unable to take the research findings on face value and work with them. Different approaches will have to be taken considering the agencies, their programmes and the contexts. The idea of ACCRA Mozambique seemed like an interesting option: ACCRA works with one agency to implement the research findings as much as possible on a specific programme and documents this as a pilot and case study.</p>	<p>Review the concept and approach of how ACCRA will strengthen the initiatives of agencies, possibly through practical demonstration projects/pilots.</p>
<p>D. Engagement of the consortium agencies: The agencies have proved to be committed to ACCRA in their engagement in-country and through their work on the Steering Committee. The evaluation did see some initial steps to integrate ACCRA’s findings into international initiatives and broader policies, although all agreed it could be reinforced further (and it was still too early to see a broader impact). The absence of a communications specialist also meant that ACCRA could not build partnerships with campaign/advocacy colleagues in the agencies to integrate further its work. It is possible that this will occur with the publishing of the research findings but it should be reinforced.</p>	<p>Review and discuss within the Steering Committee the engagement of consortium agencies with ACCRA and how it could be reinforced.</p>
<p>E. ACCRA activities: Suggested improvements for the main activity components of ACCRA are described above. With the site research completed, this evaluation would encourage focusing on the influencing and capacity building activities of the programme. A balance must be found between the research component and the other activities that take more prominence in phase 2.</p>	<p>Ensure a focus on influencing and capacity building activities balanced with a smaller research component, as required.</p>

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