

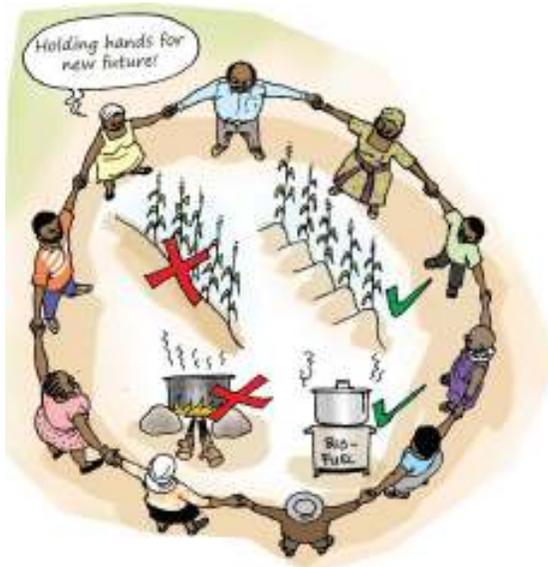
CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION IN PRACTICE

STORIES ABOUT FLEXIBLE AND FORWARD-LOOKING DECISION-MAKING (FFDM)

People in Africa are, along with those in the rest of the world, experiencing climate change. Here are the stories of three people and how they go about adapting to the changes.

The first person – let's call him **Mr Live for Today or Mr Reacting** - looks after his family, tends his crops and cares for his animals. He does not take much note of the past, or the learning of his ancestors or the advice of his elders. When things go well he is happy, when floods come or crops fail he is unhappy – but he what? Shrugs his shoulders, learns little and carries on as before. When change happens he reacts as best he can, but he finds it hard to respond as he has not prepared for change and so he does what he likes best – sitting with the other men, telling jokes and stories and trying to forget his, as he sees it, bad luck. His decision-making is what? It is based on what is happening today – he limps from one crisis to another trying to adapt reactively as best he can – and finds that often he suffers as a result.

The second person also looks after his family, tends his crops and cares for his animals but he is wiser. He takes note of what people have learned in the past, of the patterns in the sky, of the ways that animals and insects behave and the signs given by plants. Let's call him what? **Mr Thoughtful about the Past or Mr Deliberative**. He shows respect to his ancestors and elders and takes their advice. He learns from the past and makes his preparations for the future – he knows what happened before and will be ready for it. His wife will keep some seeds aside for next year's planting or for, in emergency, food. His community makes good decisions on the use of land so the soil stays fertile and the water remains healthy. But still they have suffered because bad things have happened that are new and the people were not prepared for them. The weather has been unpredictable with rains coming at the wrong time – when the shoots from the seeds they planted have already shrivelled. Their decision-making is what? Backward-looking, based on a past that is no longer a guide to the future. They try to adapt in a deliberate way, hoping to plan for every eventuality, but they cannot be prepared for unexpected future changes as they have not considered what they might be.



The third person has realised an important thing – that people must be prepared to adapt to new types of changes they have not experienced before. The community have understood that they cannot foresee the future exactly, but they can prepare for change if they work together for a new future by thinking about what those changes might be and how to be ready to adapt to them. This person's name is what? **Mrs Forward Looking or Mrs Flexible maybe**. And her district is called Local Adaptive Capacity – surely a strange name for a place in Africa – but we must all be prepared to be different these days. The people here do look after their families, tend their crops and care for their animals. They do take note of what their ancestors and elders say and they do not ignore the patterns in the sky or the signs given by plants and animals – but what? They have realised that this is not enough. Mrs Forward Looking calls a meeting in the District and people think about the

challenges that they might face, given climate change, and what they might need to do differently to be ready to deal with such things. After discussion, they understand what? That they need to be flexible and forward-looking in the face of unpredictable change and they make a list of the principles that they need to follow.

The local newspaper agrees to publish the list so that other districts can also make suggestions. here is the article that [might have] appeared in the 'Maputo Vision' in March 2013.

District Publishes Principles for Adapting to Climate Change!

Mrs Forward Looking, Flexible, the Chief Administrative Officer of the Local Adaptive Capacity District has, with her community, developed a set of Principles they intend to follow to be resilient communities able to adapt to climate change. By following these Principles they are readying themselves to deal with the unpredictability of the climate change we are all experiencing. Readers are invited to comment on the list which is being turned into practical advice to be used in schools, villages and communities to help educate and involve people. The Government are interested in these initiatives and this Newspaper hopes to publish a response from the Minister in due course.

LAC THEMES AND FFDM PRINCIPLES

The Principles for Forward-looking and Flexible Decision-making (FFDM) are arranged under five 'Local Adaptive Capacity' (LAC) Themes as follows. "Communities adapting to climate change:

1. ***Understand and employ forward-looking decision-making effectively*** - means:
 - Have we considered possible threats and opportunities that may arise over long-term time horizons? Such as acknowledging that rainfall patterns may not be the same as they were in the past.
 - Have we reflected and learned what did and didn't work in the past? Such as how we dealt with past trends like population growth, food price shocks and access to technology.
2. ***Use knowledge and information in meaningful ways*** – which means, for example:
 - Have we understood what kinds of information we can get, what they tells us, and how to integrate them? Such as being able to access and interpret information from the Meteorological Service over various timescales.
 - Have we incorporated different sources of knowledge, interests and views of all stakeholders in planning? Such as strengthening community outreach, awareness and participation in the design and delivery of district planning.
3. ***Have evolving institutions and fair entitlements*** – which means, for example:
 - Have we addressed issues of power, hierarchy and patronage? Such as ensuring that vulnerable and marginalised groups are empowered in planning procedures.
 - Have we built on existing institutions that have proven capacities for adapting to change? Such as strengthening capacities and mainstreaming FFDM into existing committees and groups.
4. ***Foster innovation and develop enabling environments*** – which means, for example:
 - Have we tried to explore the 'wiggle room' to allow for greater flexibility and promote forward-looking decision-making? Such as experimenting with new ideas and local innovations.
 - Have we introduced appropriate incentives to allow stakeholders to change their perceptions, behaviours and actions? Such as championing initiatives and self-organisation.
5. ***Access and utilise assets / capabilities as necessary*** – which means, for example:
 - Have we collaborated with other sectors and agencies and built mutual trust? Such as establishing a working relationship with the Meteorology Department to better access and understand weather / climate forecasts.
 - Have we looked for opportunities to extend the working environment and relationships between key actors. Such as lobbying and applying pressure on key central agents."

COMMUNICATING A CLEAR AND ACCESSIBLE MESSAGE

It has been realised that these Principles are too abstract and theoretic. We are pleased to announce that the Africa Climate Change Resilience Alliance (ACCRA) is in the process of developing Posters, based on these Principles, which are expressed in practical everyday language (these Posters are available in a PowerPoint file). ACCRA is having a local African artist represent the messages in pictures as Figure 1 below shows.



Figure 1: The Local Adaptive Capacity (LAC) Themes shown on a Poster

This Newspaper thinks this is a worthy initiative and applauds the efforts of the ACCRA Team which has already run a Workshop, with an awareness developing Game, in the Kotido District of Karamoja. It is also running workshops in the Gemechis woreda in Ethiopia and in Mozambique which, if successful will lead the way for these new ways-of-working to be used more widely.

There is **more about ACCRA** here: <http://community.eldis.org/accra/>

And the United Kingdom's **Overseas Development Institute** has published an article on the **research** which is supporting ACCRA here: <http://www.odi.org.uk/publications/7290-flexible-forward-decision-making-complexity-science-adaptation-climate-change>

The adaptation part of this research is summarised briefly on the next page ...

TYPES OF FORWARD AND BACKWARD-LOOKING ADAPTATION

Academics provide analysis of Climate Change FFDM Principles!

In another development, academics at an African university have made a chart, Figure 2 below, which shows the adaptive behaviour of the three people in the story compared side by side.

Readers can see that it is inevitable that Mr Reactive will always be driven along by events beyond his control because he makes little attempt to prepare himself. Whereas Mr Deliberative at least learns from the past and makes preparations – but he can still be caught out when the unexpected happens.

The best and most effective results will be achieved by Mrs Forward-Looking, Flexible who not only is considering what possible futures they may be faced with but who is, with her communities and by collaborating with neighbouring districts, putting in place capabilities which will enable people to adapt flexibly to almost whatever comes along – even though they know they cannot predict specific events exactly.

Backward / Forward-looking Ways-of-Working Compared

		[Backward-looking]		[Forward-looking]	
		Adaptation: Reactive	Adaptation: Deliberative	Adaptation: Flexible	Capabilities for Flexible Adaptation
ACCRA LAC* Characteristics	FFDM and Governance	- Absent- [Have to deal with the now]	Deducing policy / plans based on hindsight - minimise 'risk'	Trade-off possible futures and consequences - given uncertainty	Open mindset able to work with ongoing change / uncertainty
	Innovation - exploration	Minimal / habits, but necessity the 'mother of invention'	Converging on 'best practice' – test wobble-room	Explore / experiment. Discover / exploit degrees-of-freedom / opportunities	'Imagineering' e.g. forecasting, backcasting, horizon scanning
	Knowledge and Information	Use of traditional wisdom / lore - as seems fit	Generating 'facts' from historical data / 'lessons identified'	Formulate / iterate possibilities and establish 'measures' of change	Able to work with plausible narratives and relevant indicators / warnings
	Institutions and Entitlements	'Fixed', based on historical / tribal precedents	Organising in line with plan delivery	Devolve / adapt for change. Support initiative / proven resilience	Flexible mix of formal and ad-hoc communities of interest
	Asset base - availability	Indigenous - use what's on hand, current skills	Matching assets (usually centrally held) to plans	Accessing what's relevant / best placed given ongoing needs	(Re)distributable for contingency - plus strategic / central for crises
	Nature of Outcomes	Driven by events, people 'passive'	Events dealt with only if planned for, otherwise 'crisis'	Events mitigated - as possible change is anticipated and adaptive capacity in place	

© ACCRA 2012 *LAC = Local Adaptive Capacity

Figure 2: Comparison of Ways people might Adapt

[NB: There is more on this topic here:

<http://complexitydemystified.wordpress.com/2012/09/30/transitioning-to-adaptive-forward-looking-ways-of-working/>]