Climate Leadership for Effective Adaptation and Resilience (CLEAR)

CLIMATE CHANGE AND PAKISTAN CLEAR

Pakistan is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The agriculture sector, in particular, is impacted by long-term reduction in rainfall; increase in the frequency of droughts and floods; and variability in seasons, particularly higher temperatures and delayed start of colder months. These changes adversely affect crop sowing, maturing and harvesting cycles. More specifically, higher temperatures may reduce crop yields and encourage insect and pest infestations. Changes in rainfall may lead to crop failures, destabilise cultivation cycles, and lead to declines in yield. Agriculture contributes 21% to Pakistan's GDP and employs 43.7% of the labour force (Economic Survey 2013-2014). Adverse impacts on agriculture pose a serious threat not only to the national economy but also to food security. Therefore, climate change adaptation in the agriculture sector has emerged as an important priority for Pakistan.

In 2012, LEAD Pakistan began implementing the “Climate Leadership for Effective Adaptation and Resilience” (CLEAR) project. CLEAR addresses:

(i) lack of capacity and information among local government and community partners;

(ii) limited and ineffectively articulated public demand for government action on climate change adaptation; and

(iii) lack of awareness among vulnerable communities about their rights in relation to climate change.
The Climate Leadership for Effective Adaptation and Resilience (CLEAR) project has been implemented by LEAD Pakistan in collaboration with a strong network of local partners. The five-year project, nearing its conclusion, focuses on catalyzing action to spur climate change adaptation and promote resilience among small-scale farmers in Sindh and southern Punjab. CLEAR works closely with partner organizations in 13 districts including: Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur, Multan, Rahimyar Khan, Qasimabad, Kharo Jung, Thatta, Badin, Dadu, Hyderabad, Shikarpur, Larkana, and Khairpur.

CEA’s interventions have adopted a slightly different intervention design and implementation methodology, each partner was trained in the same strategy. Partner outreach to communities followed the same overall methodology. Planning in each of the districts revolved around a range of issues such as agriculture and fisheries, poverty reduction, health and land use. Overwhelmingly, partners were preoccupied with threats to agricultural productivity and yield. Proposed better management practices for agriculture included water management, climate resistant crop varieties, land leveling, alternative crop selection and developing adaptive crop calendars.

Successful micro-projects showcased actions that make smallholder farming more resilient to climate shocks, more sustainable, and efficient. The latter is a skilled service that farmers who have adopted land leveling need to hire externally. Training in these techniques may improve employment prospects, generate income, and ensure sustained interest and ownership of these practices. It may also assure that these changes in attitudes and practices are sustained in the long-term, which in turn opens up new prospects, generates income, and ensures sustained interest and ownership of these practices. It may also assure that these changes in attitudes and practices are sustained in the long-term, which in turn opens up new opportunities for large-scale impetus for change.

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CLEAR has been successful in embracing and showcasing the philosophy that climate change adaptation, especially initiatives geared toward vulnerable and marginalized rural populations, must be embedded within local context, cognizant of practitioner constraints and should address local needs in order to be relevant and effective. Hence, CLEAR’s interventions should move beyond relying on local communities to drive change. At the national level, it is necessary to sustain and promote adaptation interventions with widespread reach. Robust change in adaptation planning and implementation can only emerge when provincial influence within both government and other advocates for change in allocating resources, prioritizing adaptation interventions, and formulating concrete plans of action.

CLEAR has developed a proof of concept solution relying on a varied evidence base to demonstrate that adaptation and climate resilience interventions can be undertaken at low cost and that community level behavioural change is central to their long-term success.

Communities should be engaged and building locally led, participatory climate change awareness and training local communities on how to become more resilient. CLEAR has demonstrated that sustained community engagement and partner outreach are pivotal for supporting climate change awareness.

Farmers were among the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and concomitant concerns of food insecurity and sustainability of livelihoods. CLEAR’s interventions created an environment to bring about a better picture of the threats facing local communities. Following this research, CLEAR carried out a series of participatory consultations with local communities, and local partner organizations. These joint consultations were in addition to the separate meetings held with district officials working in sectors most affected by climate change such as agriculture, irrigation, livestock and fishery. The district plans, developed by a team of farmers and livestockmen adopting a practical approach to problem solving. CLEAR participants were encouraged to debate climate change issues and impacts affecting them, prioritize key issues, and propose practical solutions that could be tested through small-scale experiments.

Each plan was encapsulated in a district specific Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA) and was approved by representatives from local government departments and community partners. The LAPAs were viewed as a valuable planning tool, and to support future policy update. Simultaneously, community partners had to be educated since they were to be directly involved in project implementation. Furthermore, their experiences would determine the effectiveness, or lack thereof of the larger-scale adaptation projects.

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CEA’s extensive network of partner organisations implemented the micro-projects in collaboration with selected community partners. Each partner organisation was responsible forsecuring project implementation methodology, tracking project progress, challenges and successes. While each of LEAD-Pakistan’s partners under the CEA project may have adopted a slightly different intervention design and implementation methodology, each partner was trained in the same strategy. Partner outreach to communities followed the same overall methodology, especially in terms of understanding and identifying specific issues facing smallholder farmers.

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Community leaders must be brought into the discussion and should be engaged in local initiatives. While bottom-up approaches are necessary to make changes, large-scale impetus for change is pushed forward by community leaders – who have the resources, the social, political and financial confidence to push for greater change.

Government engagement should be formalised through agreements or MoUs that include indicators of change, success, failure, etc. Since posted officials may change frequently and disrupt relationship building, formalized agreements with departments provide a measure of continuity. None of the partners we spoke to would go so far as to say that they had formalised agreements with government departments. This may be because the government had not required it of them as part of project implementation.

When designing future interventions, it may be useful to develop clear and measurable indicators to assess the effectiveness of each project, its sustainability and extent. It may be useful to train local farmers or educated/literate younger people from farming communities and train them in nacca installation and land leveling techniques. This is something that the partners have already identified as a need and they have begun to address it. Training in these techniques may improve employment prospects, generate income, and ensure sustained interest and ownership of these practices. It may also assure that these changes in attitudes and practices are sustained in the long-term, which in turn opens up new opportunities for large-scale impetus for change is pushed forward by community leaders – who have the resources, the social, political and financial confidence to push for greater change.
10. The expense associated with government engagement (e.g. travel and daily allowance etc.) is a serious concern and needs to be addressed to make future engagement more sustainable. If allowances of this nature are sanctioned by LEAD Pakistan then such external costs should be built into micro-projects. However, this stance is not wholly unproblematic. It is important to note that these costs may also indicate that the local partners did not have robust ties with district government and were unable to generate enough goodwill to ask for government support.

11. The gravity of the issues facing the local community (acute water shortages, drought like conditions) means that adaptation interventions under such circumstances face tremendous community scepticism in terms of their effectiveness and ability to make livelihoods more resilient particularly when it comes to shifting from major staple income generating crops such as wheat, sugarcane and cotton.

Further Reading

The CLEAR project has produced a series of case studies, policy briefs and project reports over its lifetime. These are all publicly available through LEAD Pakistan’s website.

Detailed information on local partners and associated micro-projects is also available. The former will help the Government and other interested civil society organisations to identify appropriate partners across 13 districts in Punjab and Sindh. The latter will serve as key information sources on intervention design and implementation.

Based on the CLEAR project’s real-time, real-world experiences a series of policy briefs have been developed. The briefs are intended for policy-makers and planners. Concise and evidence-based the policy briefs link context specific issues with broader national debates on climate change and adaptation. They also make recommendations for future policy design and programme uptake.

LEAD Pakistan envisions the CLEAR project as one more step in their journey towards integrating adaptation and resilience planning into future interventions.

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