

**Climate Change and Social Learning (CCSL):**

**Supporting local decision making for climate change, agriculture and food security**

Monday 4th March 2013

**MEETING SUMMARY**

**Introduction**

### Following a successful meeting at IIED between donors and practitioners from 14 different organizations, a synthesis of the key insights on social learning has been drawn up. The ideas below represent the valuable contributions of everyone present at the meeting.

### This document contains a brief definition of social learning, experiences of and current thinking on social learning, and a diagram outlining ways for donors to get involved in social learning. Relevant events, funding opportunities and shared resources identified by meeting participants are listed in tables in the annexes at the end of the document.

### Definition of social learning

**What is social learning?**

* No consensus on the definition in the literature.
* Draws on many fields of thinking.
* A change that goes beyond the individual and achieves transformation of perspectives and practices in collective settings.
* Relies on facilitation of knowledge sharing and joint inquiring, learning and acting 🡪 new shared ways of knowing
* Different from participation, which can happen without mutual learning.
* Ideally involves **triple loop learning**: an improvement on single loop (focused on improving the action) and double loop (focused on improving the intention behind the action), focused on changes in governance and the way we learn.

**Experiences of social learning & current thinking**

In this session participants were asked to talk about their successes and failures with social learning, and to share their thoughts on the challenges and opportunities. Themes that emerged from this discussion, along with examples, are presented below.

1. ***Finding a common language in a given context***

There is the need to consider the variety of perspectives. We typically view social learning challenges and opportunities from the perspective of researchers, but what about the private sector? Private sector partners want to be involved, not just for CSR but for multiple reasons.

**EXAMPLE:** Mars is doing rice and cacao research for their chocolate bars – don’t want government money or expertise, but do want to cooperate.

Similarly, there is a need to consider the variety of contexts. Social learning will be different in every country, culture, group, etc. Climate change programs need to be located in different cultures when working across different countries. We can’t describe things in universal ways

**EXAMPLE:** When designing programs, DfID has recognized the importance of locating them in their respective places/communities. A multi-country program is framed in different ways in each country. Recognizing the importance of learning platforms at various levels is also key to stimulating feedback loops that help to continually adjust and improve activities and the thinking that governs them.

1. ***Being demand driven***

One challenge to becoming demand driven is the disconnect between policy and practice.

**EXAMPLE:** CTA promotes inclusive policies to help farmers cope with climate change, which look great, but the implementation of such policies is lacking. One key issue is that farmer organisations’ voices are not heard—and their interests are not protected—at the national and regional levels.

1. ***Be flexible and selective***

It’s important to know what are the limits of social learning are, and when other processes need to take over.

**EXAMPLE:** The US and climate change denial. It’s beyond rationality, so the prospects of rational discourse are limited.

We need also to recognize that there are no simple answers - social learning isn’t always going to lead to a neat resolution. Neat resolutions can be dangerous because they imply everyone has bought into a singular answer/lined up behind the dominant position. We need to accept that there are issues on which there will be intractable positions. Mutual understanding of where the disconnect lies can still be a starting point. What matters is to clarify the agendas of the actors involved and their position towards a possible common agenda.

**EXAMPLE:** CIDA’s forest program – it took a whole year for different stakeholders to come together at the same table. The more people involved the more complex and difficult it is to communicate and the greater the need to facilitate and negotiate such interactions.

1. ***Integrating/embedding social learning***

Need to ask whether your own organization is a learning one, i.e. is there space for you to see whether things are working or not, and change based on that information? If not – then ask yourself if you are actually engaging in social learning.

**EXAMPLE:** Learning Alliance approach has had considerable success in Latin America (e.g. glacial retreat program run by Care). Has clearly documented and articulated story owned by local people.

1. ***Making the case for SL***

More evidence is needed. Qualitative and quantitative studies that overlap would be a powerful tool–but we don’t have these yet.

**EXAMPLE:** 3ie has a program that does systematic review of evidence – has looked at farmer field schools. Now launching a thematic window on climate change – aim is to develop a better knowledge base to look at the diversity of social learning approaches.

**Workshop/Plenary: Ways for donors to get involved**

In this session we asked, “What do we need to do differently to incorporate a more social learning-focussed approach from a donor perspective?” Two groups discussed this question in relation to three areas: a) partnerships, b) ways to bring different knowledges together, and c) the challenge of the time continuum. The following diagrams outline the results of the two groups’ brainstorming efforts. Specific ideas for key partners, resources, funding opportunities and events are listed in Annexes 1-4.

**Implementing Social Learning**

**Partnerships**

**Time Scales**

**Time Scales**

### Participant list

### Name Affiliation

### Blane Harvey IDRC

### Camilla Toulmin IIED

### Carla Hogan-Rufelds CIDA

### Clare Shakya DFID

### Ewen Le Borgne ILRI

### Ilaria Firmian IFAD

### Janet Strachan Commonwealth Secretariat

### Jörg Lohmann GIZ

### Karl Deering Care International

### Kerstin Silvestre Garcia GIZ

### Lars Otto Naess IDS

### Liz Carlile IIED

### Olu Ajayi CTA

### Patti Kristjanson ICRAF

### Phil Davies 3IE

### Philip Thornton ILRI

### Philippe Remy IFAD

### Sandra Corsi IFAD

### Soma Chakrabarti IFAD

### Sonja Vermeulen CCAFS

Weibke Foerch ILRI

**ANNEX 1: Events and spaces**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name | Location | Date | What |
| [Community Based Adaptation 7th International Conference](http://www.iied.org/cba7-seventh-international-conference-community-based-adaptation) | Dhaka, Bangladesh | 18-25 April 2-13 | What are the latest approaches for mainstreaming community-based adaptation into international, national and local planning and processes? IIED’s 7th Annual Community Based Adaptation Conference (CBA7) aims to provide the latest thinking from climate scientists, policy makers and practitioners to answer this question, and to share lessons learned. |
| [Campbell Collaboration’s Annual Colloquium](http://www.campbellcollaboration.org/colloquium_next/index.php) | Chicago, USA | 21-23 May 2013 | Group focuses on education, crime, social welfare, and now international development. The Colloquium will bring together leading researchers in the field of systematic reviews and policymakers from across the world to address crucial questions relating to the methodology and use of systematic reviews. |
| [Week on Agricultural Innovation in Africa](http://ccafs.cgiar.org/node/1919) (particularly [AISA event](http://aisa2013.wikispaces.com/)) | Nairobi, Kenya | 25-31 May 2013 | The AISA workshop is designed to bring together recent experiences in promoting agricultural innovation processes in Africa, to analyse the approaches and methods and their strengths and weaknesses, and to draw lessons for the way forward in terms of policy, research and practice related to agricultural innovation. See [*this page*](http://www.prolinnova.net/content/celebrating-agricultural-innovation-africa-may-2013) for more info. |
| G8+ Food and Nutrition Summit | London | 8 June 2013 | TBD |
| [Cochrane Collaboration’s Annual Colloquium](http://colloquium.cochrane.org/) | Quebec, USA | 19-23 September 2013 | Health care – has excellent user groups 🡪 Dipex database for patients’ experiences. Theme this year is “better knowledge for better health” |
| Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP) - 2014 Pan-African Adaptation Learning Forum | TBD | TBD |  |

**ANNEX 2: New work and funding opportunities**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Type | Organizations Involved | What |
| Funding | Funding from BMZ /GIZ/BEAF | 2 opportunities for agricultural research: 1) small grants (up to 60,000 EUR) as seed money for proposal development – contact Joerg for guidelines or see [this page](http://www.giz.de/Themen/en/2005.htm) 2) project funding (up to 1.2 million EUR) – for technology transfer, [guidelines here](http://www.giz.de/Themen/en/dokumente/giz2013-en-project-funding-guidelines.pdf) 3) CIM expert secondment to CG or non-CG partners (two different avenues of application) |
| Funding | IDRC | [Canadian International Food Security Research Fund](http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Programs/Agriculture_and_the_Environment/Canadian_International_Food_Security_Research_Fund/Pages/default.aspx) Phase II – upcoming call for proposals $62 million |
| Funding | ? | Copenhagen Accord long-term climate financing commitment $100 billion/year by 2020 |
| Funding | 3ie | M&E of SL activities; interested in creating an evidence base for the value of SL |
| Funding | Belmont Forum | Upcoming call on food security research. [Belmont Forum website](http://igfagcr.org/index.php/belmont-forum) |
| Project | NEPAD, AUC | Proposed study on what worked and didn’t work with respect to agriculture/CAADP |
| Project | CARIAA, IDRC | Evaluation templates and indicators for SL |
| Project | IDRC | Undertaking stock-take of learning processes in consortia on climate and development |
| Project | Oxfam, Save the Children, One, Christian Aid, Tearfund | [“If” campaign](http://enoughfoodif.org/) – UK-based food security campaign (a la Make Poverty History) |
| Project | UNFCCC | Process and potential work programme on agriculture: potential to partner and influence this (longer term strategic view) |
| Project | CAADP | Mandate and ownership is with African states and stakeholder compacts, so we should get behind that |
| Project | CDKN | Climate knowledge platforms |
| Project | CCAFS | Regional learning platforms in West Africa, East Africa, South Asia, Southease Asia, Latin America |
| Project | CARIAA | Opportunities in adaptation research; opportunity to build consortia to respond to SL focus; using shared approach to evidence collection; sharing case studies; partnering in a future collective event; comparative studies in regions where several of us are engaged. [CARIAA website](http://www.idrc.ca/EN/Programs/Agriculture_and_the_Environment/CARIAA/Pages/default.aspx) |
| Idea | CCAFS | Develop a call for proposals to develop better ways to assess social learning potential and results (e.g. indicators) on the CCSL sandbox |
| Idea | IIED | Number of projects with social learning attributes – could help in documenting evidence for SL; Interested in exploring different indicators |
| Idea | ? | Develop a curriculum for facilitation of local social learning processes, e.g. on a wiki? |
| Idea | Commonwealth Secretariat | Explore with colleagues at the Commonwealth Secretariat the potential for social learning in our projects e.g. using two areas for demonstration and dialogue: 1) climate finance blocks and opportunities in small and vulnerable states, 2) resilience building in small states |

**ANNEX 3: Shared resources**

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| Resource | What it is | Where to find it |
| The Sandbox | The “Sandbox” currently consists of a Wiki page and Yammer group, as well as a mechanism for seed funding innovative ideas   * + - **Wiki page**:       * Open to everyone, although you will need to ask for admin rights to update the page     - **Yammer group**: a great way of sourcing ideas, discussing them, defining collective problems, etc.       * Has 70 members, with 15-20 very active members     - Please let Ewen LeBorgne (E.LeBorgne@cgiar.org) know if you would like to join so he can send you an invitation!   If you’re interested in funding the Sandbox, please get in touch! | Wiki: <http://ccsl.wikispaces.com/>  Yammer group:  [www.yammer.com](http://www.yammer.com) |
| UNDP | Media Development training | [website](http://web.undp.org/comtoolkit/reaching-the-outside-world/outside-world-core-concepts-media-development.shtml) |
| CTA | Media training | [website](http://www.cta.int/en/Media2) |
| IIED | Media training | [website](http://www.iied.org/media-centre) |