**Community Based Adaptation strengthening resilience in East and Southern Africa’s drylands**

**A Learning Event for practitioners, researchers and policy makers**

**ILRI complex, Addis Ababa, September 1-4th 2014**

**DRAFT Concept Note 7th April 2014**

**Background**

On top of existing challenges, climate change is posing a further threat to the development of already vulnerable communities of East and Southern African drylands. In order to meet the scale and magnitude of these challenges, we must find a new integrated way of working which combines development, adaptation, risk management and humanitarian assistance. All these types of assistance need to recognise current and future impacts from climate change and its inherent uncertainty, in order to support resilient communities to be able to absorb shocks and stresses whilst continuing on a positive development path. Community based adaptation (CBA) to climate change can play an important role in this process, providing valuable and essential practical approaches and evidence for policy decision making towards building climate resilient development across dryland communities and beyond.

**Aim of the learning conference**

To bring together stakeholders from a diverse a range of disciplines working with dryland communities across East and Southern Africa to collectively gain a better understanding of how CBA can contribute to an integrated approach to achieving resilient development on an ongoing basis not just when faced with extreme events including drought. Participants will share and learn on practical CBA approaches, experiences and challenges, discuss critical issues and questions and co-generate knowledge and strategies, good practices and principles, for a more comprehensive, informed and effective approach to strengthening the resilience of vulnerable people in Africa’s dryland communities.

**The conference will aim to do this through focusing discussions around a few key questions:**

1. What can be learnt and applied from CBA practice and evidence in drylands, in responding to differential vulnerability, understanding climate information and trends, enabling systems which strengthen adaptive capacity and increasing resilience?
2. What are the drivers of vulnerability among dryland communities, how can vulnerable people increase their adaptive capacity for better informed decision making, plans and actions on livelihoods and resilience and what are the barriers to change?
3. How can development, DRR, social protection and emergency response integrate adaptation and work together better to achieve the common goal of building the resilience of vulnerable populations in Eastern and Southern African drylands?

**Learning and Conference outcomes:**

* Better understanding of the links between adaptation, adaptive capacity, resilience and CBA in drylands
* Good practices, success factors and key lessons identified and highlighted for adaptation and resilience in drylands
* Key challenges and questions exposed and analyzed to explore further how to strengthen resilient development in drylands
* A communique highlighting the Learning Event major achievements and strong messages agreed upon by practitioners and researchers to take to decision-makers
* A synthesis technical report available for the use of practitioners

**Format:**

The event will take a social learning approach, providing space over 4 days for a variety of learning and sharing sessions using a mixture of structured panel discussions, small group discussions and open space sessions. The aim is that each session will build on the previous one, progressing from sharing and learning from experiences in specific themes, identifying successes and challenges, to raising critical questions and resulting in consensus on good practices and new knowledge on how to address critical issues.

Formal presentations and plenaries will be kept to a minimum but there will be a ‘market place’ for exhibiting different programmes, approaches, tools, etc. where participants can interact with each other and learn about latest ideas, debates, practices in more detail. Ethiopian agro/pastoralist innovators could be invited on this day to share directly with participants?

Co-created knowledge emerging from the event will provide a basis for influencing and building capacity of all actors in relation to CBA and resilience programming and will be captured in a participant communique aimed at influencing future decision making, finance mechanisms and implementation, and further learning and exchange within Africa.

**Themes**

The thematic learning areas of the conference are yet to be defined. The more themes, the more complex the conference structure with possible need for parallel sessions – four would be a good number…. All themes would be linked to climate change and adaptation. Themes could relate to:

* The value of climate information and communications services and combining knowledge systems for agro/pastoralist decision making, early warning systems and risk reduction.
* Practical approaches: Synergies and differences between community based approaches to adaptation, DRR, natural resource management, development planning and more
* Integrating adaptation into planning systems in drylands
* Measuring and evaluating resilience and adaptation
* Adaptation and resilience at scale – pastoralist mobility and sedenterisation, transitioning livelihoods in the face of climate change, landscape level/ecosystem based decision making
* Understanding changing risk and uncertainty in the drylands and its impacts on gender dynamics, underlying causes of vulnerability and inequality and livelihood choices
* Adaptation in relation to pastoralist value chains - livestock productivity, trade, the private sector and service delivery systems

**Participants:**

A maximum of 75 participants are expected, mainly aimed at practitioners implementing programmes in East and Southern African drylands. Practitioners include government and NGO staff at local to national level with an interest in climate change adaptation and working with pastoralists, agro-pastoralists and semi-arid farmers in DRR, adaptation, resilience, food security, livestock, natural resource management pastoralism or related programmes. A smaller number of national level policy makers, researchers and CSOs working on the same issues would be among the participants.

A conference announcement with application form will be widely circulated in East and Southern Africa. Participants will be selected based on analysis of applications to attend against agreed criteria.

**Organisers/Partners**

ALP and CARE Ethiopia have joined with CCAFS to host and facilitate the event in Addis. ICIPE have expressed interest. CARE is looking for other organisations who are interested in agreeing on a shared vision for the event and realising this through supporting the design, announcement dissemination, participation and/or implementation in some form.

**Provisional timeline of key preparatory activities:**

* Share draft concept with prospective partners and agree level of engagement + expectations - **wk 7th April**
* Agree strategic partners and core planning team to collaborate on the organisation of the event - **March/April**
* Comments to draft concept received and conference planning document drafted **by 5th May**
* Hold WebEx meeting with core planning team on conference objectives, outcomes and design **Week of 5th May**
* Publicize the learning event + send out call for participants – **aim for 9th May, latest 23rd May**
* Identify and engage with event facilitators (develop TORs and contracts) – **April- June**
* Prepare budgets, communications plans, criteria for participant selection, next design steps – **May - July**
* Identify and engage with potential sponsors, supporters and target VIPs – **May onwards**
* Hold face to face meeting with core planning team to finalise event design and details– **1st or 2nd wk of June (Nairobi or Addis)**
* Deadline for receiving participant applications – **early June**
* Participant selection process **by end June**
* Develop conference programme and conference information pack **June – July**
* Notify successful participants with invitation letter – **by mid July**
* Arrange participant travel logistics (visas, accommodation, flights) – **July - Aug**
* Final design meeting to develop detailed facilitation and comms plan **wk of 11th or 18th August**
* Pre-event preparation on site – facilitators + core team **– 29th – 31st Aug**
* Conference implementation **1-4th September**
* Communique, report and other comms production

Contacts as at 7th April:

1. Nicola Ward, ALP [nward@careclimatechange.org](mailto:nward@careclimatechange.org)
2. Fiona Percy, ALP [fiona@careclimatechange.org](mailto:fiona@careclimatechange.org)
3. Esther Watts, CARE Ethiopia, [Watts@care.org.et](mailto:Watts@care.org.et)

Logistics:

1. Sylvia Miyumo, ALP [alp@careclimatechange.org](mailto:alp@careclimatechange.org)
2. Mediha Mohammed, CARE Ethiopia [MedihaM@care.org.et](mailto:MedihaM@care.org.et)

ADD LOGOS CARE, CCAFS, other