

# Poverty and Environment Seminar Series

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## **Local Livelihood Strategies and Climate Change (part 1)**

### **Summary from DDRN/DIIS seminar, April 29 2008**

Local populations in developing countries are not helpless victims of climate change, but relate and respond actively to changes in their local environment. That was one of the key messages coming out of a recent seminar held under the DDRN at the Danish Institute of International Studies. The seminar was attended by practitioners, researchers and diplomats from the development community and took its outset in a presentation by Chasca Twyman from Department of Geography at the University of Sheffield. Twyman described the findings of a recent cutting-edge study of how local communities respond to climate change in South Africa. The study combined the work of climatologists on local climate change with social science approaches and found among other things that:

1. Local communities are well aware of the climatic changes surrounding them, and their perceptions of specific changes in eg drought patterns fit well with the findings of expert climatologists.
2. Local communities have always been exposed to some degree of climatic variation, eg that rainy seasons may be late or that floods may occasionally occur. For this they have developed knowledge and strategies over many years that provide a valuable basis for adapting to climate change at the local level.
3. What is new and of concern to communities is that this variation is becoming increasingly unpredictable and therefore requires fairly substantial changes in local farming and livelihood practices.
4. Community members do not sit passively by in the face of climate change, but respond to these changes in multiple ways. For instance, they may shift their emphasis from crop production to livestock, or they may try to reduce individual risks by engaging in joint activities (eg collective irrigation schemes) with others.
5. Not everyone can adapt to climate change in this way however. Within communities, those who have the best access to capital, knowledge and social networks can respond better to climate change than the poorest.
6. The way people respond to climate change also varies considerably from location to location, depending on eg the way and extent to which climate change takes place, the way local livelihoods are composed and the particular features of individual communities such as eg their leaders, organisation etc.
7. The impacts of climate change and the way local people adapt to these cannot be understood or addressed in isolation from other processes of economic,

social and political change taking place locally. Climate change adaptation forms a part of people's broader and often multi-faceted livelihood strategies.

Drawing on these findings, participants at the seminar engaged in group discussions to identify some of the key challenges for policy and research in addressing and supporting local communities in adapting to climate change. This included the following points:

1. It will be crucial but also challenging to find the right policy "spaces" for addressing local people's efforts to adapt to climate change. For instance, an obvious place to start seems to be in agricultural policies, but in many contexts current agricultural policies are simply not geared to address or accommodate local adaptation strategies.
2. It is important to define more clearly whether support to local climate adaptation can and should be done through mainstreaming into the different sectors and policies, or whether it also requires dedicated policies and support programmes of its own. To address these issues, we need to clarify how we can distinguish climate change impacts and local responses from other processes of change, and whether this is meaningful to do in the first place.
3. Policy and research will need to approach the impacts of climate change and local responses as dynamic and continuously changing – not as a "before/after" situation. Eg what appears to be short-term advantage from climate change may become a long-term disadvantage. This and the fact that adaptation strategies differ from location to location means that policies and donor support must be flexible and avoid creating rigid frameworks that could end up constraining or even countering local adaptation. At the practical level, there is a need to develop "baskets of options" rather than one-shot solutions.
4. It is important to pay attention to the potential negative impacts of climate change mitigation on local livelihoods and adaptation efforts. The effects of bio fuels on food security is one example of this. Another is the potential impacts of large-scale forest conservation efforts on local rights and livelihoods
5. Support to local adaptation must pay attention to the differentiated impacts of climate change on the poorest and the better off respectively. The success of people's efforts to adapt to climate change is to a large extent dependent on the economic and social resources (eg funds, land, social networks etc) they have available. This means that eg the poorest in the villages will respond differently and/or have less chance of success in their adaptation than more well-endowed households.
6. Both scientific forecasts and indigenous knowledge can serve as a basis on which to support and develop local adaptation. However, exchanging and "translating" knowledge on climate change and adaptation between the many different actors poses a major challenge.
7. Research in local livelihood strategies has previously tended to focus on rural livelihoods. However it is important to keep in mind that populations in urban areas will also be hit by climate change impacts and there is a need to address and understand their responses and situations better.

## List of participants

	<b>Name</b>		<b>Organisation</b>
1.	Helle Overgaard Larsen	Associate professor	University of Copenhagen
2.	Li Kai	Commercial Office	Embassy of China
3.	Zhang Ying	Commercial Office	Embassy of China
4.	Nino Brodin	Researcher	Independent
5.	Maj Manczak	Programleder Miombo	WWF Verdensnaturfonden
6.	Abbas Salum	Student	University of Aalborg
7.	Uffe Wilken	Journalist, writer	Independent
8.	Jens Raunsø Jensen	Associate Professor	LIFE, University of Copenhagen
9.	Andrea Karner	Student	Faculty of Life Science Univ. of Copenhagen
10.	Rasmus H.Pedersen	Journalist	dk4
11.	Mogens Buch-Hansen	Assoc. Professor	Roskilde University
12.	Mille Lund	Antropolog	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
13.	Christina Nilsson	Project coordinator	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
14.	Bente V. Hansen	Consultant	NIRAS
15.	Jørgen Svendsen	civilingeniør	Independent
16.	Mike Baab	Analyst	Danish Institute of Human Rights
17.	Erwin Van den Eede	head of section	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
18.	Torben Birch-Thomsen	Associate Professor	Department of Geography and Geology
19.	Jannik Boesen	ex senior researcher	University of Copenhagen
20.	Vlada Fuks		Danish Institute of International Studies
21.	Jarek Greser	Ph.D	Direktoratet for Fødevarer og Erhverv
22.	Seth Frimpong		Danish Institute of Human Rights
23.	Thomas Birk	Cand.scient	The Hunger Project-Ghana
24.	Leif Hommelgaard	Senior Technical Adviser	Department of Geography, Univ. of Copenhagen
25.	Louise Nielsen	Student	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
26.	Bo Bramming	Teacher	University of Aarhus
27.	Jonas Finn Olsen	Consultant	Dantan , Dansk- Tanzaniansk venskabsforening
28.	Danny M. Ssozi	Ambassador (Deputy Head of Mission)	Independent
29.	Mette Vinqvist	PhD student	Uganda Embassy University of Copenhagen

30.	Andreas E. Christensen	PhD fellow	University of Copenhagen
31.	Emmanuel Fongeh	student	university of copenhagen
32.	Jan Agerholm Høybye	Technical Advisor, dr. scient.	ViSKon Aps.
33.	Nick Quist Nathaniels	Consultant	Independent consultant
34.	Kirsten Carlsen	Research assistant	Forest Landscape and Planning, Univ. of Copenhagen
35.	Volkanaud N'Guessan	Economic Counsellor	Embassy of Côte d'Ivoire, Copenhagen
36.	Peter Furu	Senior Adviser	DBL-Centre for Health Research and Development, Univ. of Copenhagen
37.	Walter J. Sanchez	Student	Roskilde Universtiy
38.	Terry Townshend	Director of Policy	GLOBE International
39.	Peter Oksen	lektor	IU/RUC
40.	Elsebeth Tarp	Senior Technical Advisor	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
41.	Ole Mertz	Associate Professor	Dept of Geography, Univ. of Copenhagen
42.	Martin Enghoff	Senior Consultant	Nordeco
43.	Jakob Kronik	Consultant	Independent
44.	Iben Nathan	Associate profesor	Forest & Landscape, Univ. of Copenhagen
45.	Mikkel Funder	Programme Researcher	Danish Institute of International Studies
46.	Nanna Hvidt	Director	Danish Institute of International Studies
47.	Sara Trærup	PhD student	University of Copenhagen and UNEP Risø Centre
48.	Vicente E. Vallenilla	Ambassador of Venezuela	Embassy of Venezuela
49.	Morten F. Thomsen	Programme Coordinator	CARE Danmark
50.	Sara Trærup	PhD student	University of Copenhagen and UNEP Risø Centre
51.	Niels J. Juhl-Nielsen	Master Student	Roskilde University
52.	Pernille Lausen Hansen	Recent graduate	Roskilde University
53.	Kishore Sharma	Director	Tulsi Europe
54.	Rebecca Bolt Ettliger	Student	Nepenthes
55.	Mimi Ipsen	Masters student	Faculty of Life Science, Univ. of Copenhagen,
56.	Lillah Emmik Sørensen	Consultant	COWI
57.	Liv Østergaard	Student	University of Lund
58.	Karl Allesø	Independent Consultant	Independent
59.	John Agami	Chairman	Lado Political Council
60.	Signe Ravnkilde	PhD candidate	DIIS

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## Poverty and Environment Seminar Series

### Programme:

## Local Livelihood Strategies and Climate Change – Part I Tuesday, 29 April 2008, 13.30-16.30

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### Background

Climate change has become a high profile issue in the global debate, but we still know little about the implications for the poorest and their livelihood strategies. Today's seminar is the first of two that address local livelihood strategies and climate change. The next session will be held on 27 May 2008, 13.30-16.30, DIIS Main Auditorium, and will focus on work in progress from the Danish resource base.

### Programme

#### 13.30-13.35

Welcome by *Nanna Hvidt*, Director, DIIS

#### 13.35-13.45

Introduction to the Poverty and Environment Seminar Series and Programme for the Afternoon by *Ole Mertz*, Chair, Danish Development Research Network

#### 13.45-14.30

Local Livelihood Strategies and Climate Change  
*Chasca Twyman*, Senior Lecturer, University of Sheffield

#### 14.30-15.00

Plenary Discussion. Discussant: *Jakob Kronik*

#### 15.00-15.15

Coffee Break

#### 15.15-16.00

Group Discussions: Participants break into groups to discuss implications for policy and research

#### 16.00-16.30

Plenary Discussion of Group Findings