



# LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION: FROM PRINCIPLES TO PRACTICE

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Highlights

- As funders and national governments invest in building resilience to climate impacts, many are recognizing the value of locally led adaptation (LLA) to manage climate risks faced by local communities and Indigenous peoples.
- Locally led action can address historical imbalances of power and disproportionate vulnerabilities that climate change will otherwise deepen.
- LLA requires governance and financing processes that prioritize the agency of local actors that are on the front lines of climate change impacts and are often best placed to identify adaptation solutions. Changing these processes to redress power imbalances and emphasize local priorities can be complex and difficult, often entailing significant shifts from standard practice.
- This paper provides examples of approaches to investing in and implementing LLA to demystify the steps funders and governments can take to operationalize and scale adaptation in line with the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation.
- Funders, governments, and other relevant actors can draw on these approaches to turn investments in and commitments to LLA into new policies, practices, and actions that ensure local partners have equitable access to climate finance and are at the center of decision-making processes.

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## Context

**Locally led adaptation recognizes the value of local knowledge and expertise to address climate risk and ensures that local actors on the front lines of climate change have equitable access to power and resources to build resilience.** As of May 2022, more than 70 organizations and governments had endorsed eight Principles for Locally Led Adaptation. These principles provide foundational guidance for an approach to adaptation that emphasizes local priorities. Recent commitments to LLA by adaptation funders and governments demonstrate growing attention to ensuring that adaptation finance reaches local actors, especially populations experiencing disproportionate vulnerabilities. At the same time, there is a growing body of knowledge and research that provides guidance for implementing LLA and underscores LLA as a global priority, relevant in all regions of the world. This paper documents diverse approaches to putting the Principles for LLA into practice and provides examples of how funders and governments can follow through on commitments to speed up and scale implementation of LLA.

## About This Working Paper

**This paper contributes to the growing evidence base on LLA and encourages continued learning from local practice and expertise.** It unpacks different funding and implementation models to show the Principles for LLA in practice. This paper provides evidence specifically around *processes* for decentralizing adaptation finance and decision-making power to the local level. Due to the complexities and longtime horizons associated with measuring *impacts* and *outcomes* of adaptation, these topics are outside of the paper's scope.

**This paper was co-developed by a consortium of partners working together to deliver the Adaptation Action Coalition's Locally Led Adaptation Workstream.** These partners are Centro para la Autonomía y Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (Center for the Autonomy and Development of Indigenous Peoples), the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute, ENDA, Huairou Commission, the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, the International Institute for Environment and Development, Save the Children Australia, Slum Dwellers International, SouthSouthNorth, and World Resources Institute.

**The findings of this paper are most relevant to funders and governments, which will find models of finance and governance structures they can tailor and replicate to scale implementation of LLA, as well as practices and strategies for procurement, capacity building, collaboration, and program delivery.** The paper is also relevant to local actors such as grassroots and civil society organizations, which may find examples of approaches and practices to enhance their adaptation efforts.

## Existing LLA Efforts

**The examples highlighted in this paper illustrate that there are many proven ways that adaptation finance can reach local actors and ensure they have agency, depending on the context and type of organization, and that there are many opportunities available to funders and governments to adapt and scale LLA approaches.** These include leveraging existing finance and governance models, and building in practical steps and considerations for procurement, capacity building, monitoring, and other processes. Opportunities are found in mechanisms such as grants facilities, loan funds, savings schemes, microfinance, national planning policies, domestic finance programs, community-led emergency response and early warning systems, and social protection schemes. The examples reviewed for this paper show that approaches to advancing LLA often address discrete elements of LLA, but these are interconnected. They also underscore the importance of deliberately addressing structural inequalities and disproportionate climate vulnerabilities and reveal priority areas for future research.

## Recommended Strategies for Advancing LLA

**The 21 examples of investing in and implementing LLA described in this paper highlight many approaches across a range of sectors and geographic and sociocultural contexts.** Taken together, they lead to the following recommended strategies for how to advance LLA. These proposals apply to all institutions committed to implementing LLA, but they are most relevant to funders and governments.

- **Pursue opportunities to scale LLA** by increasing the amount of climate finance allocated to it, improving the quality of finance by making it more accessible

and flexible, and adjusting governance and decision-making processes to ensure that local actors have agency in adaptation planning and implementation.

- **Address the Principles for LLA holistically** so that adaptation investments, policies, and interventions enable and scale LLA in multiple ways simultaneously.
- **Advance active learning and research on LLA processes, outcomes, and impacts** to continue to fill knowledge and evidence gaps and improve collective understanding of good practices for equitable and effective LLA.
- **Integrate social equity in LLA efforts**, including by building such considerations into standard processes and decisions, and investing in mechanisms specifically designed to support groups that experience disproportional vulnerabilities.

## INTRODUCTION

Given the growing severity of climate change impacts, it is imperative that the most vulnerable and affected people and communities have the resources and power they need to build resilience. Sustainable and equitable adaptation solutions must demonstrate firsthand an understanding of local climate impacts and local context, as well as political will and ownership from the groups they aim to support (Mfitumukiza et al. 2020; Dinshaw and McGinn 2019).

Yet adaptation interventions are predominantly driven by international- and national-level decision-makers. Finance for adaptation rarely reaches the local actors that require it most urgently, and the essential knowledge and expertise they offer are frequently ignored (IIED 2020; Restle-Steinert et al. 2019). Recent estimates suggest that less than 10 percent of climate finance from international climate funds is dedicated to local action, less than 2 percent of humanitarian aid goes directly to local partners, and less than 5 percent of official designated funding for environmental protection goes to Indigenous peoples and other local communities (Soanes et al. 2017; IFRC 2015; Davis et al. 2021; Cuffe 2021). The barriers to decentralizing finance and power to the local level are widespread and complex. They include systemic social and political barriers related to structural power imbalances between local actors and national and international actors. Administrative barriers related to procurement policies and application and reporting requirements, and capacity barriers among funders, governments, and local partners, also hinder decentralization.

Despite these challenges, locally led adaptation (LLA) is happening. While LLA has only recently been recognized and formally documented as an approach, local communities have been driving their own resilience-building efforts for a long time. While severely underfunded, there are many examples of approaches to decentralizing adaptation finance and decision-making power to which funders, governments, and civil society groups can turn. This paper selects 21 of these examples from across the Asia-Pacific region, Latin America and the Caribbean, and sub-Saharan Africa. From a formal local adaptation planning process in Nepal to a community-led flood early warning system in the Gran Chaco region and a small grants facility in South Africa, diverse approaches provide a foundation for scaling LLA.

LLA entails more equitable distribution of power and resources and elevates local innovation and knowledge for more effective resilience-building. It recognizes that the people and communities most affected by climate change are often those facing marginalization due to racism, colonialism, and systemic inequities in income, education, social capital, and political power. These groups require more equitable access to financing and decision-making power to ensure that adaptation investments reflect their priorities (Coger et al. 2021a). Such an approach recognizes the value of expertise among local actors that have been coping with climate impacts and understand the nuance of their local environmental, cultural, and sociopolitical contexts. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reports, addressing these and other inequities also contributes to more effective adaptation (IPCC 2022).

Locally led adaptation is distinct from consultative, participatory, inclusive, and many community-based approaches to adaptation in that it gives local actors *agency* over adaptation, rather than merely allowing their *participation* in processes around adaptation. When adaptation is locally led, local partners can make decisions about implementing adaptation efforts and managing funding, and have improved access to adequate resources and support (Tye and Suarez 2021).

Local communities and institutions, including local civil societies, small businesses, and governments, offer the potential to inform and deliver more context-specific, coherent, agile, and cost-effective adaptation solutions and benefits. Integrating a diversity of local perspectives and recognizing local capacities and knowledge can

enhance efficiency and help avoid duplication of effort (Tye and Suarez 2021; Mfitumukiza et al. 2020). Eriksen et al. (2021) found that failure to include the perspectives of those most vulnerable and exposed to climate impacts can cause adaptation interventions to have negative unintended consequences.

A consortium of research, grassroots, and civil society organizations (CSOs) developed eight Principles for Locally Led Adaptation in 2020 for the Global Commission on Adaptation (Soanes et al. 2021). These principles are based on learning from practice driven by pioneer grassroots and community-based organizations, as well as formal research on delivering adaptation finance at the local level. The principles also build on and have potential to contribute to the localization movements in the humanitarian and development sectors, including efforts surrounding the humanitarian aid sector's Grand Bargain, which set a target for 25 percent of humanitarian funding to be more directly accessible to the local level (IFRC 2021). Box 1 summarizes the Principles for LLA, and Appendix B provides a complete description of each of the principles.

More than 70 institutions had endorsed the Principles of Locally Led Adaptation by the time of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) in November 2021. By backing these principles, endorsing institutions committed to changing their priorities and ways of working and to strengthen existing efforts to promote the agency of local actors in adaptation. Box 2 describes additional recognition of the importance of locally led adaptation in addressing the climate crisis.

Increasing global commitments to LLA begs the question of how these commitments will be delivered—a gap this paper will help fill. The paper reviews 21 case examples of LLA spanning different sectors and geographic regions to provide relevant learnings to help funders and governments invest in, implement, and scale LLA. This paper is also relevant to civil society and grassroots organizations, and other institutions seeking to strengthen current and future investments in locally led adaptation. It acknowledges the diversity of opportunities to put LLA into practice, rather than providing an in-depth analysis of a few approaches.

### Box 1 | The Eight Principles of Locally Led Adaptation from the Global Commission on Adaptation

*Principle 1:* Devolving decision-making to the lowest appropriate level: Giving local institutions and communities more direct access to finance and decision-making power over how adaptation actions are defined, prioritized, designed, implemented; how progress is monitored; and how success is evaluated.

*Principle 2:* Addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, people living with disabilities, the displaced, Indigenous peoples, and marginalized ethnic groups: Integrating gender-based, economic, and political inequalities that are root causes of vulnerability into the core of adaptation action and encouraging vulnerable and marginalized individuals to meaningfully participate in and lead adaptation decisions.

*Principle 3:* Providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily: Supporting long-term development of local governance processes, capacity, and institutions through simpler access modalities and longer-term and more-predictable funding horizons to ensure that communities can effectively implement adaptation actions.

*Principle 4:* Investing in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy: Improving the capabilities of local institutions to ensure they can understand climate risks and uncertainties, generate solutions, and facilitate and manage adaptation initiatives over the long term without being dependent on project-based donor funding.

*Principle 5:* Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty: Informing adaptation decisions through a combination of local, traditional, Indigenous, generational, and scientific knowledge that can enable resilience under a range of future climate scenarios.

*Principle 6:* Flexible programming and learning: Enabling adaptive management to address the inherent uncertainty in adaptation, especially through robust monitoring and learning systems, flexible finance, and flexible programming.

*Principle 7:* Ensuring transparency and accountability: Making processes of financing, designing, and delivering programs more transparent and accountable downward to local stakeholders.

*Principle 8:* Collaborative action and investment: Collaboration across sectors, initiatives, and levels to ensure that different initiatives and different sources of funding (e.g., humanitarian assistance, development, disaster risk reduction, green recovery funds) support each other, and their activities avoid duplication, to enhance efficiencies and good practice.

Sources: Global Commission on Adaptation.

**Box 2 | Growing Recognition of the Role of LLA**

At COP26, global leaders and funders mobilized more than US\$450 million for efforts targeted at implementing locally led approaches to building climate resilience. These efforts include the Financing Locally Led Climate Action program in Kenya, the Community Resilience Partnership Program, the Least-Developed Country Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience (LIFE-AR), and the Taskforce on Access to Climate Finance.<sup>a</sup> The Glasgow Climate Pact recognizes the important role of Indigenous peoples and local communities, as well as their cultures and knowledge, in addressing climate change.<sup>b</sup> Other examples illustrating the growing global priority for locally led action for climate and development include the Local Climate Adaptive Living (LoCAL) Facility's commitment to scale up direct adaptation funding to local governments to \$100 million and the U.S. Agency for International Development's target to direct 25 percent of its funding to local partners (in addition to implementing the Principles for LLA). Examples of domestic efforts include the Philippines's People's Survival Fund; the U.S. government's President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience; and the Justice40 Initiative.<sup>c</sup>

Notes: <sup>a</sup> UN CCC 2021; Coger 2021; ADB n.d.; <sup>b</sup> UNFCCC 2021; <sup>c</sup> LoCAL 2020; Saldinger 2021; CCC n.d.; White House 2021a, 2021b.

**Box 3 | Definitions Relevant to LLA**

**local** – May refer to the household, business, community, municipal, district, or province level as applicable to the context and requirements of a given adaptation intervention

**local actors** – Stakeholders of an adaptation intervention or their accountable representatives at the appropriate subnational level; refers to individuals or groups from the whole of society, including the subnational government, local enterprises, civil society, and community-based organizations, as well as households and individuals<sup>a</sup>

**adaptation and resilience** – The process of adjusting and responding to actual or expected climate changes and their effects is adaptation; while adaptation is an action and process, resilience refers to the capacity of a system to cope with and adjust to a hazardous event or trend<sup>b</sup>

**locally led adaptation** – Characterized by local people and their communities having individual and collective agency over their adaptation priorities and how adaptation takes place<sup>c</sup>

**climate risk** – Refers to the level of exposure to hazards, damage, or danger resulting from climate change and the level of vulnerability to these hazards<sup>d</sup>

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Soanes et al. 2020; <sup>b</sup> IPCC 2014; <sup>c</sup> Soanes et al. 2020; <sup>d</sup> Cardona et al. 2012.

Several of the examples discussed in the paper have evolved to address climate risk but did not originate as climate adaptation efforts. Therefore, this paper is relevant to institutions, government representatives, and practitioners whose work is primarily focused on climate change and the environment, but also those in other sectors, such as humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, housing, health, and other social services, who are seeking to mainstream climate change and locally led adaptation into their work.

Box 3 elaborates on the definition of LLA and other relevant terms used in this paper. The scope of definitions is intentionally broad to cover the range of actors that are part of “the local level.”

**METHODOLOGY, LIMITATIONS, AND INTERPRETATION**

The observations presented in this paper were derived from a selection of 21 examples of locally led adaptation, which were prepared by the implementing organizations and their partners. These examples were initially collected to inform a regional dialogue series on scaling locally led adaptation, which was held between September and October 2021. These dialogues were part of a process

supported by the United Kingdom COP26 Presidency, the Adaptation Action Coalition (AAC), and the High-Level Climate Champions Race to Resilience to inform discussions on locally led adaptation at COP26 in November 2021.<sup>1</sup>

The methodology entailed four steps: selecting examples of LLA efforts for inclusion; documenting and analyzing qualitative information on each of the examples; validating this information with experts directly involved in the examples; and reviewing approaches and learnings about LLA implementation.

To source the case examples included in this paper, World Resources Institute (WRI) and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) reached out to partner organizations including civil society partners and experts working on locally led adaptation. A survey was also sent to a network of more than 150 individuals engaged in a locally led adaptation community of practice. A consortium of 10 organizations partnering under the AAC's Locally Led Adaptation Workstream selected the included examples: Centro para la Autonomía y Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas (CADPI; Center for

the Autonomy and Development of Indigenous Peoples), the Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI), ENDA, Huairou Commission, the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), IIED, Save the Children Australia, Slum Dwellers International, SouthSouthNorth (SSN), and WRI.

The examples of efforts to support locally led adaptation were selected based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation, and fulfillment of both Principle 1 on decentralized decision-making and Principle 2 on addressing structural inequalities;<sup>2</sup> this criterion was used as a threshold for delivering locally led processes<sup>3</sup>
- Availability of information on the demonstrated locally led processes, recognizing that formal documentation of many examples of LLA has not been available to date
- Diversity of funding mechanisms—examples represent grassroots- and civil society–led funds, donor-supported funds, loan funds, cooperative funds, grant facilities, microfinance facilities, and public policy and government initiatives
- Diversity of geographic contexts—examples represent a range of geographic regions and levels, including global, regional, national, and subnational initiatives from Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia-Pacific regions

The organizations directly implementing or supporting the interventions provided most of the data and information about each example in the form of presentations, interviews, and written summaries. The analytical framework used the Principles for LLA and analysis of aspects of locally led adaptation by Tye and Suarez (2021), and included elements like quality of finance, integration of local knowledge, and degree of local ownership. The framework was also used to categorize these observations by other features such as location, stakeholder group, funding mechanism type, and funding source. Before applying this framework to review the full set of selected examples, the authors applied it to a smaller subset to ensure that the method sufficiently captured the data of interest.

The paper’s findings and recommendations were shaped by the small sample size and the limited extent of documented data for these examples. It therefore provides

an overview of a wide range of approaches from different contexts, rather than an in-depth analysis of a few approaches. The observations and lessons learned should not be considered generalizable or definitive, but rather are intended to be adapted to other relevant contexts as appropriate. The paper does not provide findings about outcomes or impacts of the included examples of LLA, but rather focuses on effectiveness in terms of *process* and explores approaches and learning. Given the dynamic nature of adaptation to climate change and the frequently long time periods required to be able to measure outcomes and impacts of adaptation interventions, it is not possible to rely on measuring impact alone. Understanding how to improve the process of adaptation is critical to addressing climate risk (Christiansen et al. 2018).

## EXAMPLES OF MECHANISMS AND APPROACHES FOR ADVANCING LLA

The examples that follow highlight a range of mechanisms by which adaptation finance reaches local actors, as well as the different roles that organizations can play in supporting the devolution of funding and decentralization of power to enable locally led adaptation. Most of these examples are of funds operationalized by civil society or grassroots groups, some of which have a specific focus on issues such as Indigenous rights and informal settlements.

The following are the examples of LLA included in this paper, organized by broad geographic region:

### Global

- **Huairou Commission’s Community Resilience Funds:** The Community Resilience Funds are an innovative and flexible finance mechanism to channel resources directly to grassroots women’s groups living in risk-prone poor communities.
- **Pawanka Fund:** The Pawanka Fund is an Indigenous-led grantmaking fund supporting Indigenous peoples’ initiatives to promote and protect traditional knowledge, well-being, rights, and self-determined development to face climate impacts.
- **Slum Dwellers International’s Urban Poor Fund International:** Urban Poor Fund International delivers demand-driven resources to local communities as capital grants so that they can design and implement projects, including those focused on adaptation, that drive their own development.

- **LoCAL mechanism:** A standard, internationally recognized mechanism designed and hosted by the United Nations Capital Development Fund, LoCAL promotes climate change–resilient communities and local economies through performance-based climate resilience grants to local authorities in 29 developing or least-developed countries.

## Africa

- **Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility (SGF) in South Africa:** Implemented through the South African National Biodiversity Institute, the SGF’s grantmaking process relies on the Enhanced Direct Access mechanism to deliver climate finance.
- **Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia’s (EIF Namibia’s) Empower to Adapt:** EIF Namibia supports and implements adaptation projects that ensure the sustainable use of natural resources. Specifically, its Empower to Adapt initiative seeks to devolve rights and responsibilities over natural resources to rural communities.
- **Gungano Urban Poor Loan Fund in Zimbabwe:** The Zimbabwe Homeless Peoples’ Federation, a national network of low-income urban communities, operates savings schemes that contribute to the Gungano Fund, which provides affordable loans to support sustainable livelihoods and upgrade informal settlements.
- **Kenya’s County Climate Change Fund (CCCF):** The CCCF is a mechanism through which counties can create, access, and use climate finance from different sources to build community resilience through projects identified and prioritized by local communities.
- **Shibuye Community Health Workers (SCHW) in Kenya:** SCHW is a grassroots women’s organization that resources members to innovate, learn, and partner with government to secure women’s land rights, food, and livelihoods.
- **Tree Aid in Mali:** Tree Aid strengthens community-led forest management through Village Tree Enterprises and local forest management committees. It provides initial capital without requiring collateral to enable the participation of marginalized, landless individuals.

## Asia-Pacific

- **Climate Bridge Fund in Bangladesh:** A trust fund established by BRAC, the Climate Bridge Fund provides direct climate finance—from short-term project funding to sustainable provision of services and infrastructure for climate-induced migrants—to registered nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to bridge the financial gap.
- **Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPA) in Nepal:** Nepal’s community-led, multi-stakeholder climate action planning process puts communities and local governments at the center of local adaptation planning (Maharajan 2019). The LAPA initiatives assist local governments and communities in driving collective climate action.
- **Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT):** A nonprofit organization, MCT operates a series of endowment, sinking, and revolving funds to support biodiversity conservation via long-term and sustainable grant financing and capacity building of local organizations.
- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in India:** The Indian government established MGNRES in 2005 to provide livelihood security to every Indian household and is now the world’s largest public works program. In the state of Odisha, climate risk management was incorporated into MGNREGS.
- **Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) in India:** SSP resources grassroots women’s organizations to publicly demonstrate their capacities to design, manage, and monitor funds to drive climate-resilient initiatives and attract investments to scale up these initiatives.
- **YAKKUM Emergency Unit (YEU) in Indonesia:** YEU is a unit of YAKKUM (the Christian Foundation for Public Health), invested in women-led sustainable livelihoods and food security initiatives, which enhance the credibility and visibility of women’s groups as drivers of resilience.
- **Shramik Bharti in India:** A not-for-profit grassroots development organization that operates in North India, Shramik Bharti supports women-led community grain banks that provide finance and food security.

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## Latin America and the Caribbean

- **Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund in the Caribbean:** A global large and small grant-making facility and capacity building program supporting CSOs in biodiversity conservation in the Caribbean through two five-year investments (2010–2016 and 2021–2026). The small grant mechanism is administered by CANARI.
- **Fundecooperación in Costa Rica:** A private foundation, Fundecooperación delivers microfinance and grant-based finance to smallholder farmers; micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs); and community-based organizations (CBOs) for climate resilience and green growth projects.
- **Gran Chaco Proadapt in Argentina, Paraguay, and Bolivia:** A tri-national alliance formed by organized civil society, the private sector, and local governments, Gran Chaco Proadapt builds the adaptive capacities of vulnerable social groups in the Gran Chaco region.
- **Sustainable Island Resource Framework (SIRF) Fund in Antigua and Barbuda:** A national funding facility, the SIRF Fund supports environmental management and climate adaptation and mitigation, including through loans and grants to local communities, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals (GAB 2019).

Appendix A includes additional descriptions of each of these examples.

These examples fall into several broad categories: intermediary-managed funds, funds accessed by grassroots organizations, government-managed funds, and private foundations. Examples within each category illustrate the approaches to governing finance for LLA, which offer different advantages. These categories are not mutually exclusive, and some examples align with more than one category. The descriptions below provide a sense of the range of entry points to advancing LLA, as well as the types of actors and their various roles.

**Intermediary-managed funds** are managed by national or regional intermediaries that facilitate access to adaptation finance by local organizations. These funds provide structure and support for local organizations to access international climate finance for LLA.

For example, the Micronesia Conservation Trust accesses international climate funds from sources such as the Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund, and Green Climate Fund (GCF) and uses a traditional request-for-proposal process to select partners and disburse finance, working with community-level partners to develop their proposals. MCT employs a small grants facility mechanism that also funds components of plans that have already been developed.

Another example is the Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility in South Africa, which was implemented through the South African National Biodiversity Institute and executed by SouthSouthNorth. SGF's grantmaking process relies on the Enhanced Direct Access mechanism to deliver climate finance under the Adaptation Fund.

**Funds accessed by grassroots organizations** such as farmer/producer cooperatives, savings and credit groups, caregiver groups, and informal housing and settlement associations are operationalized by local actors from a given community itself. The bottom-up financing approach of these funds enhances the agency of local actors in funds management. The Community Resilience Funds foster the capacity of grassroots women's groups to transparently manage and make accountable decisions on the use of funds. The funds are available to grassroots groups such as those affiliated with NGOs like YAKKUM Emergency Unit in Indonesia and Swayam Shikshan Prayog in India as well as to grassroots networks such as Community Health Workers in Kenya.

The Pawanka Fund is an Indigenous-led fund that receives finance from foundations and operates through a Guiding Committee that includes representatives from seven sociocultural regions. The fund develops relationships with possible grantees and encourages them to apply based on their needs. The fund also issues calls for proposals.

**Government-managed funds** channel public finance to the local level through dedicated funds in different ways. They provide linkages with countries' decentralized structures and existing national plans and processes.

For example, the Environmental Investment Fund of Namibia adopts a locally led approach to identifying context-specific, practical adaptation solutions under three funding windows (ecosystem-based

adaptation, climate-resilient agriculture, and climate-proof infrastructure) and provides grants directly to communities for implementation.

Antigua and Barbuda's Department of Environment disburses funds through the SIRF Fund channels. The Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund Enhanced Direct Access mechanism are the primary sources of finance channeled through the SIRF Fund, but the government of Antigua and Barbuda intends to generate revenue to support the SIRF Fund through various fees, taxes, and carbon credits.

**Private actors** also have a role in providing adaptation finance and helping it reach local actors. With the costs of adaptation potentially reaching \$300 billion per year by 2030 and inadequate finance flowing for adaptation, especially to the local level, there is a sizeable gap in funding for locally led adaptation that private sector actors can help fill (UNEP 2021; UNFCCC 2021).

Fundecooperación is a sustainable development private foundation providing microfinance and other services in Costa Rica. Fundecooperación has accessed finance through the Adaptation Fund to extend climate adaptation for agriculture. It works closely with each client and with rural communities to understand their needs and co-create a plan of action with financing, providing guidance and capacity along the way.

## APPROACHES TO PUTTING THE PRINCIPLES FOR LLA INTO PRACTICE

The examples that follow illustrate a variety of approaches for putting the principles for locally led adaptation into practice. This section is organized by principle and highlights efforts that are already successfully underway to enable locally led adaptation at scale. While the section examines each of the principles individually, they were developed to be applied together. For adaptation to be locally led, all eight principles should be implemented holistically. As illustrated over the course of this section, each of the 21 examples featured in the paper offer approaches to implementing multiple principles simultaneously.

### Principle 1: Devolving decision-making to the lowest appropriate level

The examples below highlight different arrangements for devolving decision-making to the lowest appropriate level, including by leveraging existing decentralized government systems to support locally led adaptation.

**Leveraging decentralized decision-making helps integrate LLA into existing planning processes,** promoting durable, whole-of-society adaptation (IIED 2017; Hesse 2016; LIFE-AR 2019). The LoCAL mechanism's performance-based climate resilience grants are channeled through existing national to subnational government fiscal transfer systems. Local authorities directly access and determine the priorities for these grants. This selection process is facilitated by an Investment Menu, which reflects needs and priorities identified through a rigorous, localized vulnerability assessment to ensure the interventions selected achieve adaptation aims. The involvement of local authorities creates linkages with existing adaptation planning processes and plans, thereby connecting locally led adaptation with adaptation efforts at other levels of government.

The development and implementation process for Nepal's Local Adaptation Plans of Action also follows existing government processes. It grew out of an earlier national adaptation planning process, the development of a National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA). The LAPA mechanism has been mainstreamed into local governments' budgets, enabling it to shift from a short-term project to a longer-term program. The LAPA process supports locally led adaptation by formalizing input from local actors into adaptation planning, and it also intentionally includes traditionally excluded groups, including women, youth, and ethnic minorities, in the decision-making process.

**Civil society-led efforts, such as grassroots groups, representative committees, and federations, can leverage formal decentralized processes to further devolve adaptation decision-making.** The YAKKUM Emergency Unit, Indonesia uses the Huairou Commission's Climate Resilience Funds (CRF) to enable the active involvement of women's groups in the village development planning process. The CRF is used to organize women's groups, enable them to map vulnerabilities and risks, and demonstrate solutions. These processes build their confidence and their public

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credibility, thereby strengthening women’s capacities to articulate their resilience priorities and effectively navigate the village consultative forums (Musrenbang) to influence village plans and budgets.

Another nongovernmental process that can complement existing government decentralization is the establishment of representative committees that form local informal institutional structures. Tree Aid in Mali has established local forest management committees and enterprises selling non-timber forest products. These committees can facilitate local representation in decision-making around local natural resources. The forest management committees bring together representatives from various communities involved in forest management to steer the development, agreement, and implementation of local forest management plans, as well as decide how Tree Aid project funds are spent toward identified goals. Tree Aid provides access to finance and decision-making processes to groups that tend to be excluded from access to credit from microfinance institutions, such as women and people who do not own land. The establishment of these committees helped improve the financial situation of participating entrepreneurs while also improving forest management (Hou-Jones et al. 2021; Tree Aid 2020).

Swayam Shikshan Prayog in India is an example of how a federation model can enable devolved decision-making to local actors. Women-run federations affiliated with SSP receive the Huairou Commission’s Community Resilience Funds. These grassroots women’s federations decide whom to give the funds to, how much funding to disburse, and for what purpose. Once established, these networks of women’s groups can leverage additional resources from the government and banks.

## **Principle 2: Addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, people living with disabilities, the displaced, Indigenous peoples, and marginalized ethnic groups**

Even when decisions are made at the local level under locally led adaptation, the process and outcomes are not inherently equitable at the local level. Capture of adaptation resources by “elites”—such as existing political leaders—for their own benefit rather than that of the community, and structural inequalities such as meetings being held when women cannot attend can still result in some voices being marginalized. The examples

below showcase how locally led adaptation efforts can intentionally address structural inequities and elevate groups that have been traditionally marginalized.

**Tackling the root causes of vulnerability supports shifts in the dynamics of power and decision-making.** In India, small and marginal farmers, who cultivate fields smaller than one and two hectares, respectively, face grain shortages throughout the year. They often need to borrow grains from larger farmers and return them at harvest time but are then bound to harvest their fields at a lower wage. The Shramik Bharti-supported community grain banks provide training and afford more economic choices and independence to farmers, increasing their bargaining power and helping to shift the power dynamic between farmers and landlords. Shramik Bharti creates opportunities for women to have leadership roles and decision-making authority in the community grain banks, putting them in the position to mobilize the broader community to benefit the elderly and other groups that have been traditionally marginalized.

**Integrating equity considerations in eligibility or selection criteria ensures the inclusion of groups that are marginalized.** Pawanka Fund selects grantees based in part on how they score on a “cultural due diligence” assessment, which includes an evaluation of whether the potential local partner grantee consistently promotes gender equity and well-being for their community, and whether they revitalize traditional knowledge practices.

Loans for upgrading infrastructure to address flooding and other small-scale adaptation solutions provided through Antigua and Barbuda’s SIRF Fund explicitly target individuals, such as informal workers; households; and small businesses that tend to be excluded from accessing finance through banks and cooperatives that view them as high risk. The SIRF Fund provides 50 percent of loans to female-headed households, including dedicated funding for single mothers through a special lending program with flexible repayment options. It also aims to ensure that persons living with disabilities, older adults, and youth also have access to funding.

**Gender- and social equity-focused training and capacity building can equip practitioners at several levels, providing multiple entry points to address equity considerations.** The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund is a large and small grant-

making and capacity building facility that supports CSOs to conserve biodiversity hotspots globally. In the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot, CANARI, a regional homegrown intermediary, administers the small grant mechanism and provides all CSO recipients of funding capacity building and training on gender-responsive approaches and environmental and social safeguards. In Antigua and Barbuda, as part of the SIRF Fund, policymakers, planners, and analysts in the economic and social development sectors receive gender training to equip them with more gender-sensitive responses. The trainings help these programs deliver gender-specific targets.

**Monitoring and tracking tools provide another opportunity to ensure social equity considerations are addressed.** In conjunction with training and capacity building, CANARI uses the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund’s gender tracking tool, which allows CSOs receiving grants to self-assess if, and to what extent, gender considerations are integrated into their programs and other operations. Baseline and endline administration of the tool tracks change over the course of project life cycles. As another example, the Small Grants Facility in South Africa disaggregates gender and youth across all its results.

### Principle 3: Providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily

Locally led adaptation solutions implemented at scale require funding that is “patient,” in that the funding model incorporates the time required for learning as well as flexibility for adaptive management, and permits enough time to deliver results. Funding that is “predictable” is available over a long time horizon and not dependent on excessive reporting.

**Continuous, or sustained, finance, an element of patient finance, can enable local partners to make the decisions that are right for them.** Insufficient time, often a result of short-term, project-based financing, results in decision-making structures that are fragile and unsustainable. The Micronesia Conservation Trust also provides sustained financing by allowing some of its existing local community awardees to apply for additional funding under new financing windows. This has enabled sustained partnerships and projects to continue for over 10 years. Shramik Bharti has leveraged ongoing funding from HDFC Bank’s corporate social responsibility initiative to create 60 community grain banks and develop

village-level resource pools, allowing farmers, many of whom are women, to shift back to traditional varieties of crops suited to the local landscape, and to access grain and other resources quickly and easily in emergencies, such as at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic when there were sudden disruptions in the flow of goods to markets.

Providing an easy mechanism for replenishing funds can address any anticipated and/or potential funding gaps. Antigua and Barbuda’s Department of Environment allows grantees under the SIRF Fund to request additional funds once they have spent 70 percent of their initial allocation. This prevents potential gaps in funding due to any administrative delays in processing invoices and payments. This streamlining of the procurement process makes funding more predictable.

### Funding timelines sensitive to the local context support patient and predictable funding.

Disbursements from the Community Resilience Funds through Swayam Shikshan Prayog provide a flexible set of loan options for grassroots organizations and individuals, include revolving loans that follow the harvesting cycle instead of the fiscal year, and allow recipients to repay after the sale of produce rather than monthly. This flexibility in turn allows for the experimentation and innovation required to build resilience to new and changing impacts of climate change (Tye and Suarez 2021).

**Faster and easier access to adaptation finance is a tool to protect lives and livelihoods in urgent situations,** such as those addressed by the Climate Bridge Fund, which provides services and infrastructure for climate-induced migrants. The fund provides quick, direct access to funding as soon as six months from application receipt, recognizing that if too much time passes, support becomes less relevant. Shibuye Community Health Workers is a peer-learning organization that operates in western Kenya to improve the food security of communities living on land that has been degraded by extractive industries. It facilitates access to the Community Resilience Funds, which provide funding within two weeks of application. In addition to adaptation investments, the predictable funding source helps women mobilize and respond to emergencies such as erosion and flooding, which threaten agricultural productivity.

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**Locating funds within the communities themselves enables quicker access.** The Gungano Fund was set up by the Zimbabwe Homeless Peoples' Federation and provides loans to low-income urban households that cannot access other financial services. The funds' localization within the communities makes them quickly and easily accessible, allowing community members to mobilize resources in response to unpredictable emergencies. Frequent (daily or weekly) women-led meetings provide a regular venue for members to access savings and contribute to decision-making (Mudimu 2021; IIED 2018).

**Removing onerous requirements and providing situation-specific guidance facilitates local access to adaptation funds.** In Costa Rica, groups that are disproportionately vulnerable to climate impacts such as smallholder coffee farmers and small-to-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can access financing from Fundecooperación more easily than from traditional finance institutions such as banks and microfinance agencies. The funding requirements through Fundecooperación are less stringent—for example, recipients can also expect flexible grace and payment periods according to the nature and profitability of the enterprise being undertaken, and loan guarantees can be combined based on each recipient's situation. In addition, Fundecooperación provides financial education alongside continuous guidance before, during, and after the loan period to help SMEs succeed.

**Programs that provide social safety nets can increase ease of access to climate finance.** In the case of MGNREGS in India, the compensation for guaranteed labor flows directly from the state government to households, bypassing the district, block, and village levels. Cash and cash digitization, opening of bank accounts, and linkages with loans and saving schemes improve individuals' financial access. In connection with other efforts to build adaptive capacity, MGNREGS is an example of a social safety net that can also support climate resilience.

#### **Principle 4: Investing in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy**

Sustained local leadership and enhanced adaptive capacity requires investing in the capabilities of both local individuals and institutions. The examples in this section

highlight what these processes of strengthening local capacities can look like and how they enable change over long time horizons.

**Investing in institutional strengthening can provide the foundation for durable locally led adaptation.** Urban Poor Fund International prioritizes support for urban, poor federations to build their institutional capacities; for example, to manage funds and networks and carry out additional activities. Having strong federations that can absorb and share risk allows local actors to demonstrate their viability as partners with national actors. This has also helped federations leverage co-financing for local institutions. For instance, NGOs affiliated with Slum Dwellers International use finance from Urban Poor Fund International for demonstration projects to showcase solutions to governments and other stakeholders. These solutions are in turn leveraged for additional funding, typically from the government, to scale or replicate pilot projects. Institutional investments yield strengthened capabilities not only to adapt to climate change, but also to support capabilities that also help achieve other social and economic objectives.

Projects under Antigua and Barbuda's SIRF Fund focus on building both the technical and institutional capacity of partners, providing training on proposal writing and direct access accreditation, as well as adaptation solutions such as climate-resilient housing and infrastructure and waterway management. The SIRF Fund is also an example of socially inclusive capacity building, in that it holds workshops and trainings that are child-friendly to encourage participation by mothers and others caring for children.

**Investing in local alliances, networks, and peer-to-peer training can build lasting adaptive capacity at scale.** Gran Chaco Proadapt, which spans multiple cultures and countries in the Gran Chaco region, has established an early flood warning system. An intensive program on map-reading skills and monitoring tools has built community members' capacities to create, understand, and disseminate early-warning maps of the entire region, including through peer-to-peer training (Tye 2021). Community involvement ensures that these tools are accessible and user-friendly for all community members, promoting equitable access to weather and climate information. Complemented by women-led digital and computer literacy trainings and new technology centers established in once-isolated areas, new mobile

messaging applications will connect thousands of people for years to come, permitting real-time sharing of alerts and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing.

### Principle 5: Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty

Building robust understanding and awareness of climate risk and uncertainty requires scientific climate information as well as local, traditional, and Indigenous knowledge. Effective LLA approaches integrate different types of knowledge in efforts to understand climate risk, and support the application of climate science in local adaptation efforts.

**Integrating diverse forms of knowledge and climate information into existing activities can strengthen understanding of climate risk and uncertainty, and inform selection of the most appropriate solutions to address climate risk.** The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund utilizes tools such as participatory video, photojournaling, three-dimensional modeling, and geographic information systems to integrate local and Indigenous knowledge and practices into climate risk and vulnerability assessments, which inform adaptation and ecosystem management solutions.

Though the Gungano Urban Poor Fund was not originally established to address climate risk, over time the federation acquired experiential knowledge about it, and applied that knowledge to build the climate resilience of people living in Zimbabwe’s informal settlements. Infrastructure improvements have delivered implicit adaptation, for example, by installing dry toilets in areas prone to flooding, fitting solar energy systems, and carrying out household repairs after extreme weather events.

Under the SIRF Fund, a project funded through Green Climate Fund’s Enhanced Direct Access mechanism is integrating knowledge gained from local contractors operating in Antigua and Barbuda to update the conventional way that culverts and drains are built to make them more resilient to winds, heavy rainfall, and floods (Cole 2021).

**Innovative approaches such as games and intergenerational dialogue can enhance understanding of the complex systems involved in climate adaptation.** MGNREGS employs tools like a “climate *kunji*” scenario game to strengthen

understanding of local climate risks. This in turn informs the prioritization of risks and actions by local participants. Pawanka Fund grantee Lattu Lifespring, a community-based organization in Isiolo County in northern Kenya, implemented a project called “Promoting Community Understanding and Adaptation to Climate Change through Intergenerational, Inter-cultural Alliances and Actions.” This project used innovative community dialogues between youth and elders to share learning on traditional and contemporary understandings of climate change. The project also established youth networks for action against climate change.

### Principle 6: Flexible programming and learning

Supported by patient funding, flexible programming can allow local actors to respond to dynamic climate risk factors by investing in a range of priorities (Tye and Suarez 2021).

**Flexibility within an operational framework can allow for context-specific solutions that adhere to compliance requirements.** Huairou Commission members disburse Community Resilience Funds to grassroots women’s organizations such as farmer/producer cooperatives, savings and credit groups, caregiver groups, and informal housing and settlement associations, who live in impoverished rural and urban communities exposed to climate and disaster risks. Uses of the Community Resilience Funds vary across contexts and organizations. While all groups adhere to the operational guidelines established in 2015, each organization tailors the process to its local context, including procedures to manage, distribute, and monitor the funds to ensure transparency, efficiency, and accountability.

An example of how trial and error is embraced to allow grassroots groups to test approaches and iterate accordingly without losing access to future funding is SSP’s CRF experience. Here, federations’ investments in drought resistant crops were wiped out by untimely rain, leading women to invest in both crop and livelihoods diversification in subsequent iterations of the CRF.

**Planning opportunities for regular reflection and adjustment encourages flexibility.** The Gungano Urban Poor Fund and Nepal’s Local Adaptation Plans of Action are two examples of initiatives that have built regular reflection into programming. The Gungano Urban Poor Fund holds weekly meetings at the savings group level as well as regular meetings at the settlement, city,

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and national levels. Nepal’s LAPA process revisits climate vulnerabilities on an annual basis. Required changes that come out of this yearly assessment are in turn reflected in community and local government plans.

**Monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems can play a central role in enabling flexible programming and putting learning into practice.**

Environment Investment Fund’s Empower to Adapt initiative has a locally led climate monitoring system that informs dynamic climate change planning and adaptive management. The program provides grant-based financing to groups that rely on natural resource-based livelihoods and face disproportionate vulnerabilities to climate impacts. Its project has implemented a bottom-up approach called the “Event Book System” where communities lead in deciding what is monitored, as well as the data collection and analysis of results, to inform an adaptive management process. The system has been adopted by 60 communal conservancies throughout Namibia with ongoing efforts to provide training on using the system and promote uptake in more communities.

**Principle 7: Ensuring transparency and accountability**

The following examples highlight ways of increasing transparency and accountability to local actors (“downward” accountability), while decreasing onerous reporting requirements to funders (“upward” accountability).

**Locally driven transparency mechanisms provide valid alternatives to top-down approaches.** The Gungano Urban Poor Fund is structured around a bottom-up process that emerges from women’s savings networks. Each network has a logbook with detailed and transparent accounts of savings, including information on who has paid into the savings scheme and who currently has loans. Members of the network maintain these logbooks collaboratively, which promotes transparency. Co-owned transparency processes are alternatives to stringent upward accountability requirements from funders, with additional advantages of providing more value to local partners and serving as an example of downward accountability.

**Well-designed governance processes can promote downward accountability.** The Small Grants Facility in South Africa requires documentation of project designs

and activities that local partners approve, promoting downward accountability for locally driven decision-making. Sustainability plans, which detail how the project will continue after funds run out, also need to be signed by local leaders or community cooperatives.

The structure of Kenya’s County Climate Change Fund promotes downward accountability for climate investments. In some cases, funds for the CCCF partially come from participating county governments that commit 2 percent of their development budgets to the fund. For climate investments within each county, 70 percent of the funds are earmarked for the subnational (ward) level of government while only 20 percent is reserved for the higher-level county, the highest subnational level. The remaining 10 percent is allocated for consultation, proposal development, and monitoring and evaluation costs.

**NGOs that support grassroots networks play a useful intermediary role in easing upward accountability requirements.** There is an increasing expectation from communities that the government and funders should be accountable and transparent, especially given the burdensome due diligence and reporting requirements placed on funding recipients. The presence of an intermediary NGO between the government or funder and the community means the NGO can take on some of the onerous requirements, and advocate for reducing them. For instance, Slum Dwellers International acts as the intermediary between donors and NGOs in-country. Slum Dwellers International works with donors to reduce reporting requirements, as well as with the NGOs to minimize their reporting burden and help them understand the intended purpose of the reporting requirements.

**Principle 8: Collaborative action and investment**

Locally led adaptation cannot occur in isolation from broader adaptation and development policymaking, planning, and funding. Recognizing the importance of vertical and horizontal coordination, the examples below showcase how locally led adaptation can support, and be supported by, other goals, initiatives, and stakeholders.

**The range of cases shows how locally led adaptation efforts dovetail well with efforts that do not have climate adaptation as their primary goal.** The Gungano Urban Poor Fund was not originally established to address climate risks but has funded

projects that have contributed to the climate resilience of people living in Zimbabwe's informal settlements. The Climate Bridge Fund provides services and infrastructure for climate-induced migrants, and MGNREGS is primarily an employment guarantee scheme. The durability of these examples indicates that linking adaptation efforts with other relevant efforts such as access to financial services and employment can support their long-term sustainability and success.

The examples also demonstrate connections with sectoral efforts. For instance, ecosystem conservation and ecosystem-based adaptation are seen in several examples, including the Micronesia Trust Fund, the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, and Mali Tree Aid.

**Although locally led adaptation interventions must be implemented at the local level, they require the support of multiple layers of planning, policymaking, and alignment across levels of government.** For instance, for Kenya's County Climate Change Fund, the county plays a facilitative rather than decisive role in supporting the ward priorities, while community members elect representatives to ward-level committees to help ensure that local priorities are reflected. The county-level government committees also lack veto power over decisions made at the ward level.

**Collaboration among funders, governments, and local actors can support transfer of power and ownership of decision-making to the local level.**

In Nepal, the Local Adaptation Plans of Action were initially undertaken by development agencies but are now integrated and mainstreamed into the local governments' planning and budgeting processes. A close partnership among development agencies, government, and local stakeholders facilitated the successful pilot, iteration, and scaling of LAPA.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUPPORTING THE PRINCIPLES FOR LLA

Funders, governments, intermediary organizations, and local grassroots and civil society organizations are increasingly recognizing the value of locally led adaptation and are seeking to implement it at scale. A selection of these commitments to scaling LLA are illustrated in Box 2, and the practical actions that institutions can take to implement LLA will vary according to context. The approaches to implementing the locally led adaptation

described in this paper highlight a range of opportunities for institutions interested in decentralizing adaptation finance and decision-making power to local actors across sectors and regions.

These recommendations are structured to promote comprehensive application of all eight of the Principles for LLA together, rather than recommend actions for each principle in isolation. This section provides some recommendations that are most relevant to individual groups of actors (funders, governments, and grassroots and intermediate organizations), but the majority of recommendations apply to all groups and make the most sense when the whole of society is involved.

### Recommendations for funders

Funders that have already committed to the Principles for LLA or that come forward to join early champions can look to these examples of LLA implementation to help make their commitments more concrete and integrate LLA into their investments. The examples provide models that can be used to inform funding commitments and design programs that aim to give local actors and institutions authority over decisions about adaptation. Such funds **take account of the structural barriers to access faced by local actors** at different levels and provide patient, predictable, flexible, and easily accessible funding to help ensure that local actors can deftly manage uncertain risks. Offering materials and holding exchanges in multiple languages, including local languages, addresses a specific barrier local partners may face. Funders can acknowledge and, as much as possible, **compensate time and resources that local partners invest** in designing and delivering adaptation interventions (Carthy et al. 2022; Soanes et al. 2021). They can also **choose to invest in organizations and approaches that offer alternatives for local communities**, especially groups that have been marginalized, to access finance and inform decisions, as many of the examples in this paper demonstrate.

To promote cost-effective adaptation solutions that shift power to the local level, funders can also **adopt direct funding mechanisms and mechanisms for downward accountability** including reporting to local partners on funding and other commitments and inviting local partners to inform programmatic targets, objectives, and metrics (Patel et al. 2020; Coger et al. 2021a). As

fund transition to simplified and direct funding mechanisms, they can also offer tailored support for local partners to navigate application and reporting processes.

In addition to funding programs explicitly focused on climate, providers of climate finance can also fund programs that mainstream climate resilience into other locally led development or social justice efforts to better align with local priorities (Gupta et al. 2022). Similarly, other funders can integrate LLA approaches to help mainstream climate resilience in social and development programs.

## Recommendations for governments

**Governments** that are seeking to support LLA can similarly adapt the examples to their respective policy and investment contexts and can encourage others to step forward more confidently as champions of LLA. Governments can **advance implementation of LLA by integrating it into existing policies and public institutions and dedicating public finance to it.** They can use existing planning processes to devolve decision-making to subnational governments and communities, allocate funds specific to LLA or ensure funding for adaptation aligns with the LLA principles, and partner with local and grassroots organizations to ensure that resilience benefits reach the local level (Coger et al. 2021b). These techniques promote consistent inclusion of and responsiveness to local perspectives. Establishing formal roles for local representatives within governance structures can also help. Integrating LLA into existing policies and structures also requires deliberately addressing barriers that historically marginalized groups may face in accessing adaptation finance and governance processes (Carthy et al. 2022).

## Recommendations for grassroots organizations and intermediaries

**Grassroots organizations and intermediaries that support them** operate within their own unique circumstances. These organizations can learn from the examples to strengthen their own LLA efforts and propose scaling these efforts to funders and governments. Local civil society and grassroots organizations can **learn from approaches to leveraging decentralized processes;** conduct peer-to-peer learning; and use monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes for regular reflection, adjustment, and continued learning. Collectively, grassroots organizations and local intermediaries have

an important role in **sharing experiences from LLA and advocating for greater commitment to locally led action** through engagement in relevant international, regional, and national convenings and networks.

## Recommendations for all actors involved in LLA

The following strategies for supporting effective, equitable LLA at scale are applicable to all actors.

- **Pursue opportunities to scale LLA.** Existing LLA efforts, including those discussed in this paper, show the potential for LLA to be scaled and become a new standard for adaptation interventions. This will require significant increases in the quantity of climate finance currently supporting LLA. It will also require climate finance to be made more accessible, patient, predictable, and supportive of flexible programming (Patel et al. 2020; Coger et al. 2021b). Quick and regular access windows, locating funds within communities, and limiting bureaucratic complications and other potential barriers are some of the approaches to improving quality of finance (see Section 4). Improved MEL processes can also support and manage risk that may arise from more flexible, longer-term funding schemes (Coger et al. 2021a). Aligning existing climate finance commitments with the Principles for LLA can also support scaling by integrating LLA into adaptation programs, policies, and interventions.
- **Address the Principles for LLA holistically.** This paper has broken down the concept of LLA by examining diverse approaches and practices for implementing each of the eight principles. A holistic approach for LLA would entail a combination of multiple efforts across the eight principles to begin to balance asymmetries in power and address financial access barriers faced by local actors. The principles link with and can support each other. For instance, Principle 3 on patient and predictable funding makes Principle 6, on flexible programming and learning, possible. Funders, governments, and others seeking to encourage implementation of LLA should not pursue these approaches in isolation, but rather consider how the approaches can come together to ensure equitable distribution of power and resources for adaptation.
- **Advance active learning and research about LLA processes, outcomes, and impacts.** This paper aims to contribute to the growing evidence base on LLA, to which grassroots and local civil society organizations, research organizations, and funders

have also been contributing. Research questions and evidence gaps on LLA remain, however. Examples of areas for additional research include outcomes and impacts of LLA approaches, how LLA can address social inequities and injustices, and knowledge and evidence on LLA from more regions, including North America, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and West and Central Africa. Building the knowledge base of approaches and good practices that ensure that local actors have access to the information, tools, finance, and other training and resources they require remains a critical area for future research (Tye and Suarez 2020). This includes further understanding very specific barriers to funding LLA and approaches to overcoming them, such as due diligence requirements, obstructive intermediary channels, and other procurement policies. An active learning agenda will also require more examples of LLA to learn from, and therefore more scaling and replication of approaches like those described in this paper. This active learning agenda can leverage global convenings and existing adaptation research and learning initiatives such as the growing global LLA community of practice, the Adaptation Action Coalition's workstream on LLA, and the Adaptation Research Alliance to facilitate peer exchange. As LLA approaches are implemented and scaled over time and more data about the results of these approaches become available, it will become more feasible to assess the outcomes and impacts of LLA.

- **Integrate social equity in LLA efforts.** Deliberately involving groups that have traditionally been excluded and changing power dynamics to give voice and agency to people who experience marginalization and disproportionate vulnerabilities fosters more effective adaptation measures that build resilience equitably for populations (Hiwaski and Hill 2018; Eriksen et al. 2021). The examples of LLA described in this paper provide practical approaches to integrating social equity into standard processes and decisions, such as procurement processes (e.g., integrating

into selection criteria); capacity-building processes (e.g., providing training on equity topics or providing accommodations for parents to participate in technical trainings); and monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes (e.g., setting goals related to equity and tracking progress). Funders and governments can also invest in mechanisms designed to support groups that experience disproportional vulnerabilities, such as social safety net programs and funds dedicated to supporting specific populations, such as Indigenous peoples or women working in informal sectors. Valuing and integrating local, experiential, and Indigenous knowledge and expertise is another way to start addressing historic inequalities in determinations of who is qualified to advise on and engage in adaptation.

## CONCLUSION

Local communities and institutions are at the front lines of climate change impacts and offer valuable expertise and innovative solutions to address the climate crisis. Yet the prevailing systems for finance and governance of adaptation interventions are not structured to ensure agency or deliver adequate resources for local actors to adapt to climate impacts. Funders, governments, and civil society organizations are starting to acknowledge the imperative that adaptation finance reach the local level, and that imbalances of power among local, national, and international actors be redressed for more equitable and effective climate resilience.

Funders, governments, and civil society actors can advance LLA by committing to the Principles for LLA and implementing the approaches and mechanisms included in this paper. As the paper demonstrates, these approaches are already working in a range of contexts and diverse funding and governance situations. These success stories of putting the Principles for LLA into practice can serve as a rallying cry for speeding up and scaling locally led adaptation action to better address the growing urgency of the mounting climate emergency.

## APPENDIX A: LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION CASE EXAMPLE PROFILES

### Local on-granting and on-lending in Namibia via the Environmental Investment Fund

**About:** The EIF was created by an act of Namibia's parliament and has been one of the most successful national institutions in accessing climate finance from entities like the Green Climate Fund to distribute funds to the local level. It is the only accredited entity in Namibia and currently implements four GCF adaptation projects.

**Timeframe:** 2012–present

**Funding information:** Varies depending on type of project. Empower to Adapt's Resilient Grant Facility has three investment windows for grants up to US\$400,000. Funding has come from multiple sources including the GCF.

**How it is different from business as usual:** Funds go directly to legally registered community-based entities, whereas typically civil society in Namibia acts as an intermediary. The fund was designed with the needs and interests of the local communities in mind, with funding from the GCF establishing a Resilient Grant Facility under the Empower to Adapt project to provide funds directly to communities.

Sources: Aribeb 2021; EIF Namibia PMU 2022.

### Strengthening forest management in Mali with Tree Aid and Sahel Eco

**About:** Tree Aid and Sahel Eco used funds from the Darwin Initiative to implement a project to protect and restore biodiversity while increasing household incomes. The project's activities included forest protection through natural resource management best practices, planting of indigenous tree species, and capacity building to manage two local forests. The project also established two types of locally owned structures for nature-based solutions: Village Tree Enterprises (VTEs), which are small, collectively run businesses based on non-timber forest products (NTFPs), and local forest management committees.

**Timeframe:** 2017–2020

**Funding information:** An initial investment of £30,000 set up the VTEs, and £31,000 set up local forest management committees. The Darwin Initiative provided funding.

**How it was different from business as usual:** The structures established by the VTEs and forest management committees help address some fundamental challenges of climate vulnerability. In Mali, excluded groups that do not own sufficient land cannot access credit from microfinance institutions to undertake economic activities. VTEs filled this gap by enabling those excluded from access to finance to build strong local entities, allowing them to increase incomes from NTFPs. In addition, these structures improved women's participation in managing and accessing forests and their products to generate income. Women from poorer households were particularly targeted so that they could meaningfully participate in the VTEs and local forest management committees. Since these structures were established, most women

have reported a moderate or equal ability to choose how to spend their own income. After project activities were completed, most beneficiaries believed they had fairer and more equal access to local forest resources.

Sources: CAN-UK 2021; Tree Aid 2020.

### Empowering grassroots women's networks to build resilient communities in India with Swayam Shikshan Prayog via the Huairou Commission's Community Resilience Funds

**About:** Swayam Shikshan Prayog is an NGO committed to empowering grassroots women's organizations to transform community development. SSP used resources from the Huairou Commission's Community Resilience Funds to help women expand their livelihoods and generate income options in the areas of sustainable agriculture, natural resource management, and disaster-proof infrastructure.

The Community Resilience Funds provided women access to modest financing starting at \$100 to improve their climate resilience by setting up vegetable gardens, planting trees, installing low-cost toilets, and a range of other activities.

**Timeframe:** 2010–present

**Funding information:** SSP receives funds from Huairou Commission's Community Resilience Funds annually and leverages these to expand funds available to grassroots women's groups.

SSP partners with federations of women's savings and credit groups to design grassroots women-friendly systems to manage and monitor CRF operations. Federation leaders who oversee CRF operations also appoint decentralized monitoring groups. These local monitoring groups make regular field visits to monitor fund use and mentor CRF recipients.

Source: Gupta 2013.

### Urban Poor Funds through Slum Dwellers International, with an in-country example of the Gungano Urban Poor Fund in Zimbabwe

**About:** The Urban Poor Funds from Slum Dwellers International support priorities of the urban poor through capital grants by aggregating slum dwellers' own savings using revolving funds for sustainable slum upgrading. The Urban Poor Funds have increasingly emphasized urban climate resilience over time.

One in-country example of the Urban Poor Funds is the Gungano Urban Poor Fund, which provides loans to poor urban households in Zimbabwe that cannot access other financial services. The fund aims to develop a scalable and replicable finance model to partner with national and local governments to upgrade informal settlements.

**Timeframe:** 1999–present

**Funding information:** The fund has accumulated \$804,000 in savings since 2009. Slum Dwellers International's Urban Poor Funds have provided support.

**How it is different from business as usual:** The fund provides ease of access for poor households in a way that international funds do not. Funding decisions on loans are built around women-led daily and/or weekly community meetings. Ninety percent of the fund's membership are women. In addition, risk mitigation rules are designed by the community rather than an international funder. To manage the loan risk for individuals' home improvements, loans are given to groups of individuals, organized into "solidarity loan groups." The fund also reaches the urban poor where access to funding from traditional sources such as banks is limited, thereby filling a much-needed gap in finance.

The fund is also flexible in its programming and learning. When Zimbabwe experienced hyperinflation in 2008, its members developed a system called *dombo to dombo* (stone for stone) where they accepted payment in material supplies instead of cash.

*Sources:* Soanes 2018; Mudimu 2021; Masimba 2021.

## Community Resilience Funds and making decentralization work through grassroots efforts, YAKKUM Emergency Unit, Indonesia

**About:** YAKKUM Emergency Unit is an Indonesian NGO focused on building resilient communities. Since 2015 it has steadily invested in grassroots women's leadership in building resilience. Huairou Commission's Community Resilience Funds were used by YEU to provide grants help women organize waste banks, rice banks and other resilient livelihoods activities, and negotiate with government. To date, the grants have supported more than 60 women's groups 44 villages to advance their community resilience work.

**Timeframe:** 2015–present

**Funding information:** Each women's group receives approximately \$1,000–2,000 from YEU which come from the Huairou Commission's Community Resilience Fund.

**How it is different from business as usual:** The Community Resilience Funds enabled women, living in disproportionately vulnerable communities, to participate in local decision-making and design bespoke climate solutions. Ongoing resilience building activities resourced through the Community Resilience Funds include the public demonstration of resilience practices and assessment of vulnerabilities. These experiences inform the priorities women bring to local disaster management committees and local DRR platforms for disaster preparedness and planning. Also, grassroots women's risk and vulnerability assessments bring up-to-date, localized knowledge of the disaster vulnerable groups and households—frequently left out of government databases- to village disaster planning processes.

*Sources:* Gupta 2017; Warsilah and Pattinama 2021; Huairou Commission 2018.

## The County Climate Change Fund using devolution in Kenya through the national Treasury and ADA Consortium

**About:** Under Kenya's Climate Change Act of 2016, county governments became key implementers of national climate change policy. The County Climate Change Fund is integral to implementing this vision of devolved climate action. It is a mechanism through which counties can build climate-resilient communities and reduce climate vulnerabilities. The CCCF has been piloted successfully in five counties, and its expansion is a priority in Kenya's National Climate Change Action Plan (2018–2022).

**Timeframe:** 2019–present

**Funding information:** Typically, the CCCF requires a commitment of 1–2 percent of counties' development budgets.

**How it is different from business as usual:** While a business-as-usual approach is typically top down, the CCCF has a unique governance mechanism that puts in place checks and balances to ensure that decision-making is appropriately devolved.

Ward committees are a central pillar in governance, and their members are elected by communities to represent their needs. Ward committees are responsible for consulting with local communities and investing in climate action that reflects local needs. Power is maintained at the ward level and lower-county or higher-level government committees are prevented from vetoing decisions made at the ward level.

The principle of downward accountability is also reflected in the CCCF's funding structure. Ninety percent of the fund is invested in climate. Currently, 70 percent is earmarked for subnational investment at the ward level; 20 percent at the county level; and 10 percent for consultation, proposal development, and monitoring and evaluation costs.

*Sources:* Orindi 2021; Crick et al. 2019.

## Supporting displaced people in Bangladesh via the Climate Bridge Fund, BRAC Bangladesh

**About:** The Climate Bridge Fund was established by BRAC and provides direct financing to registered NGOs in Bangladesh to support projects that address issues faced by those displaced by climate change.

**Timeframe:** 2019–present

**Funding information:** €12 million with support from KfW.

**How it is different from business as usual:** The fund is unique in that its support targets the needs of those displaced by climate change, helping to ensure that some of the groups most vulnerable to climate change have funding access.

The fund has a requirement that proposal implementers and beneficiaries engage in dialogue during the application process—an effort to bridge the disconnect that typically occurs between these groups to help ensure that local needs are more strongly considered in climate actions.

*Sources:* BRAC 2020; Rabbani et al. 2021; Hridita 2021.

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## Community on-granting through the Community Adaptation Small Grants Facility in South Africa via the South African National Biodiversity Institute and SouthSouthNorth

**About:** YAKKUM Emergency Unit is an Indonesian NGO focused on building resilient communities. Since 2015 it has steadily invested in grassroots women's leadership in building resilience. Huairou Commission's Community Resilience Funds were used by YEU to provide grants help women organize waste banks, rice banks and other resilient livelihoods activities, and negotiate with government. To date, the grants have supported more than 60 women's groups 44 villages to advance their community resilience work.

**Timeframe:** 2015–present

**Funding information:** Each women's group receives approximately \$1,000–2,000 from YEU which come from the Huairou Commission's Community Resilience Fund.

**How it was different from business as usual:** The Community Resilience Funds enabled women, living in disproportionately vulnerable communities, to participate in local decision-making and design bespoke climate solutions. Ongoing resilience building activities resourced through the Community Resilience Funds include the public demonstration of resilience practices and assessment of vulnerabilities. These experiences inform the priorities women bring to local disaster management committees and local DRR platforms for disaster preparedness and planning. Also, grassroots women's risk and vulnerability assessments bring up-to-date, localized knowledge of the disaster vulnerable groups and households – frequently left out of government databases- to village disaster planning processes.

*Sources:* Soal et al. 2021; Schäfer et al. 2014; Merrill and Soal 2021; Merrill 2021.

## Grants to Indigenous peoples' organizations through the Pawanka Fund, a regional Latin American and global example

**About:** Created as a Global Indigenous Fund as part of the United Nations World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, the Pawanka Fund is led by Indigenous peoples around the globe, involving more than 300 local partners from nearly 60 countries. Funds seek to strengthen, protect, and enhance distinct cultural institutions, Indigenous worldviews, customary laws, and governance systems.

Partners also have direct funding and have full control over the funding decisions. Funding also comes with flexible requirements for reporting.

**Timeframe:** 2014–present

**Funding information:** Grants are typically around \$10,000–\$50,000 per project through support from the NoVo Foundation, Christensen Fund, Swift Foundation, Tamalpais Trust, and others.

**How it is different from business as usual:** The fund takes a highly collaborative approach and considers all partners as part of a global community of Indigenous peoples. This is different from typical top-down approaches that create an unequal power dynamic between funder and

recipient. The fund believes it can support Indigenous peoples in their own empowerment process rather than believing that the fund is empowering them. Pawanka works in philanthropy networks to change the paradigm and power relations between partners and funders.

Peer-to-peer learning exchanges are implemented across partners to share challenges, threats, and solutions for climate action. Additionally, Pawanka Fund's due diligence is set by Indigenous representatives and is based on cultural criteria in contrast to the financial and legal criteria set by other donors. These criteria require applicants to prove, for instance, that they are committed to supporting the well-being of those in the community and gender social equity.

The approach to grantmaking is collaborative and the fund supports applicants by mentoring them in the design, implementation, and monitoring of projects. It also provides technical assistance to partners so they can meet legal and financial requirements.

*Sources:* Pawanka Fund 2021; Lopez 2021.

## Civil society on-granting via the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, Caribbean Region, facilitated by CANARI

**About:** The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund's Caribbean Islands program, implemented with the support of the Caribbean intermediary CANARI, provides rapid and flexible financing to civil society to protect biodiversity and critical ecosystems.

In its role as the Regional Implementation Team, CANARI supports civil society organizations to design, implement, and replicate successful conservation projects at all scales; it also manages and monitors small grant awards. During its first Caribbean investment from 2010 to 2016, CEPF awarded 77 grants totaling around \$6.9 million.

**Timeframe:** Phase I: 2010–2016; Phase II: 2021–2026

**Funding information:** Small grants are under \$50,000, and large grants are greater than \$50,000. The CEPF is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan and the World Bank. The CEPF Phase II investment in the Caribbean Islands Biodiversity Hotspot is financed through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund–Caribbean Hotspot Project of the World Bank, using funds provided by the Government of Japan.

**How it is different from business as usual:** CCEPF and CANARI place a strong emphasis on building long-term institutional and technical capacity within civil society organizations in the Caribbean. Grants, therefore, often include a capacity building component, regardless of the technical focus. CANARI strives to help CBOs access and manage funds, facilitating local capacity-building relationships with intermediaries, where necessary.

Additionally, CEPF and CANARI seek to ensure that Caribbean regional and local civil societies are the main beneficiaries of the grants. During the Phase I investment, for example, 78 percent of funds went to regional and local Caribbean CSOs.

*Sources:* CANARI 2012; Granderson 2022.

## Gran Chaco Proadapt and Redes Chaco network's locally led model for climate information and early warning

**About:** Gran Chaco Proadapt is an initiative providing flood early warning and climate information services to support the climate resilience of communities in the Gran Chaco region, which encompasses parts of Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay. The initiative is a collaboration among civil society organizations, local private sectors, local governments, and national and international climate funders.

**Timeframe:** 2017–present

**Funding Information:** Gran Chaco Proadapt is supported by the Avina Foundation in partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank and the Nordic Development Fund.

**How it is different from business as usual:** Gran Chaco Proadapt is driven by a very active grassroots network of community organizations in the Gran Chaco region called Redes Chaco. It is founded on Redes Chaco's extensive efforts to build trust among its members, which include farmers' associations, women's collectives, youth groups, Indigenous handicraft-makers, and local authorities, as well as with partners. This trust-building took time but provided a foundation for Gran Chaco Proadapt to be an effective locally led platform. Gran Chaco Proadapt entails measures to support local agency and address barriers to accessing and using climate information that local communities may face. These include a map-reading literacy program, creative use of communications applications like WhatsApp and Telegram, and establishment of women-led digital centers in remote regions to facilitate connectivity and digital literacy training for women. Redes Chaco and Gran Chaco Proadapt promote equitable access to climate information and decision-making.

*Sources:* Tye 2021; GCP n.d.

## Local on-granting in Micronesia via the Micronesia Conservation Trust

**About:** The Micronesia Conservation Trust supports biodiversity conservation and related sustainable development for the people of Micronesia. It is the smallest entity to have been accredited by the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund.

MCT supports conservation by providing sustained and long-term funding through a grants program that encourages communities to adopt sustainable and appropriate solutions to local environmental challenges.

**Timeframe:** 2002–present

**Funding information:** MCT provides two types of grants. The first is a direct grantmaking program funded by the MCT endowment (worth \$25 million), which is predominantly funded by governments. This program funds projects, capacity building, and operating grants. In the other grantmaking program, MCT acts as an intermediary between foundations for donors to regrant to recipients in Micronesia. Small grants are between \$10,000 and \$50,000.

**How it is different from business as usual:** Unlike business as usual, the fund places emphasis on building community by providing mentorship from the proposal to grant award stages. For instance, when communities are seeking to apply for small grant funds, MCT collaboratively works with them to develop the proposal. Additionally, 90 percent of MCT's team are from the region and have built a strong relationship with their project partners for over 18 years.

Its principles of communal support are further reflected in its small grants program. When applying for a grant, local community organizations can define their own budgets, priorities, and components instead of having to adhere to predefined criteria. The funds also prioritize supporting activities for communities that already have established plans.

*Sources:* Alefaio 2021; Brown and Kadhikwa 2021; MCT n.d., 2015.

## Adaptive social protection via the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, government of Odisha State, India

**About:** The Indian government implemented the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme to guarantee 100 days of wage employment to every rural household. It also supports the development of natural resource management assets. It is one of the largest work guarantee programs in the world.

In Odisha as well as other Indian states, the integration of climate information and climate risk management approaches into the MGNREGS helps increase livelihood resiliency.

**Timeframe:** 2006–present

**Funding information:** Public finance.

**How it is different from business as usual:** MGNREGS, despite being one of the largest national wage guarantee programs in the world, took innovative approaches to devolve decision-making and respond to local needs. For instance, the 100-day wage guarantee provision, which guarantees work for up to 100 days to rural adults, has a climate provision where it allows households in drought-hit states to demand 150 days of work. In this process, community leaders were involved in decision-making fora and in planning and monitoring adaptation actions. There was also continuous engagement with communities, which set adaptation priorities and have control over 70 percent of the funds. Additionally, the program also links MGNREGS job card holders to banks and digitized payments providing access to formal banking—a major limitation in accessing finance for rural people.

MGNREGS enables rural households to participate in village-level governance bodies to make decisions around MGNREGS spending. MGNREGS carefully coordinates with government departments and schemes at the district level to support households in developing resilient agricultural strategies. For instance, the Department of Horticulture provides technical training to beneficiaries while the Integrated Tribal Development Agency supports tribal communities and MGNREGS job card holders in developing rubber plantations and processing facilities.

*Sources:* Dakua 2021; Steinbach et al. 2017.

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## Microfinance for resilience via Fundecooperación, Costa Rica

**About:** Fundecooperación is a private foundation that was accredited by the National Implementing Entity for the Adaptation Fund in Costa Rica. The fund collaborates with public and private sector entities and seeks to support financial inclusion and sustainability in tourism and agriculture. It funds micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises and community-based organizations with a business focus to bridge the gap between small-scale entrepreneurs and credit sources.

The fund has several climate-related programs. Adapta2+ is a program that supports grantmaking to different local executing entities on climate projects. Another facility is a microfinance credit facility, MEBA (Microfinance for Ecosystem-based Adaptation), for projects in sustainable livestock, MSME greening, and women and biodiversity. The fund also has a customized credit program that provides access to credit for MSMEs that do not qualify for traditional financing.

**Timeframe:** 1994–present

**Funding information:** Varies depending on the program. For example, the customized credit program offers credit for climate-resilient actions in the livestock sector ranging from about \$300 to \$11,000.

**How it is different from business as usual:** Fundecooperación is a national fund that prioritizes the interests of local organizations. It considers itself to be a bridge connecting international providers with local institutions, communities, and MSMEs. It offers a range of programs and financial products that are based on the needs of local actors and fills a gap in financing for climate resilience in areas traditionally ineligible for funds. Though the fund is accredited and eligible to access international funds like Adaptation Fund, it has retained its agility and flexibility as a small organization able to provide tailored finance to local actors.

*Sources:* Fundecooperación n.d.-a, n.d.-b.

## The Huairou Commission's Community Resilience Funds

**About:** The Community Resilience Funds are a mechanism for channelling resources to organized groups of women in climate-vulnerable areas. The funds work with a range of women's organizations—from cooperatives and savings groups to informal settlement associations.

**Timeframe:** 2015–present

**Funding information:** Funds are used by women's organizations to map community risks and vulnerabilities, identify priorities, seed and scale up women-led resilience practices, build collective leadership, and engage government institutions.

**How it is different from business as usual:** The fund is founded on the premise that women are drivers of community resilience as opposed to mere victims. Women's groups collectively decide on funding priorities. Furthermore, the flexibility of the CRF and its holistic approach to resilience locate adaptation and resilience within a holistic, transformational process that seeks to shift power relations rather than approaching resilience as a technocratic exercise.

*Source:* Huairou Commission 2018.

## Repositioning grassroots women as resilience experts and shifting institutional perspectives with Shibuye Community Health Workers in Kenya

**About:** SCHW is a community-based organization comprised of self-help groups who focus on empowering women to collectively improve the everyday lives of women and their communities.

**Timeframe:** 2011–present

**Funding information:** SCHW receives grants from Huairou Commission, Germany's Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, and other international entities.

**How it is different from business as usual:** The SCHW represents grassroots women-led actions that have enhanced women's involvement in public decision-making and agenda-setting.

To enhance their understanding of climate change impacts on their livelihoods, grassroots women collectively mapped their climate vulnerability and tested a range of resilient farming activities. Their success in activities such as rejuvenating degraded lands, improving nutrition and farm productivity in the face of climate change resulted in attracting institutional resources from partners such as the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development's credit fund—the Women Enterprise Fund—to access finance. Women from Shibuye were also invited to join local governance structures such as the county planning and budgeting mechanism in Kakamega county and committees for agriculture and poverty eradication.

*Source:* Shivutse n.d.

## Facilitating local government- and local CSO-led adaptation through integrated government financing via Nepal's Local Adaptation Plans of Action

**About:** Nepal's Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LPA) were initially piloted to implement decentralized, bottom-up planning processes that consider local adaptation needs. LPA's main objectives are to work with local actors to understand climatic conditions during uncertain times, implement flexible climate-resilient plans, and promote integrated climate approaches.

In the 2010 pilot for LPA, Village Development Committees were assigned oversight to help link national climate development planning outcomes and processes with local actions.

**Timeframe:** 2010–present

**Funding information:** Nepal LPA policy states that 80 percent of available adaptation budgets should be for local-level adaptation actions, with 20 percent for institutional capacity building and coordination at the national level. Funding includes support from the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) Australia.

**How it is different from business as usual:** The LPA mechanism is a locally led adaptation process that is formally approved by the national government, operating under the Nepal NAPA framework 2010 and National

Climate Change Policy 2011. When the LAPA mechanism was formalized in 2011, Nepal became the first country to formalize LAPA in its national planning framework.

To engage communities, the LAPA process has relied on a variety of participatory tools for climate hazard mapping including participatory vulnerability ranking and vulnerability assessments. These tools have not only contributed to building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty but enabled members of excluded groups including women and ethnic people to provide input to the planning process.

Many local actors have noted, however, that there remains a gap between local and national planning processes in practice.

*Sources:* Regmi et al. 2014; Lamsal 2021; Chaudhury et al. 2014; ADRA Nepal 2018.

## Performance-based climate resilience grants via the Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility, hosted by the United Nations Capital Development Fund

**About:** LoCAL is a mechanism to integrate climate change into local governments' planning and budgeting systems through performance-based climate resilience grants (PBCRGs). PBCRGs support subnational climate change programming and provide technical and capacity-building support.

**Timeframe:** 2011–present

**Funding information:** The fund operates primarily in least-developed countries. Typically, funding equates to 10–20 percent of regular capital grant allocations to subnational governments. Funding includes support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, NDC Partnership, and Korea's Ministry of Environment, among others.

**How it is different from business as usual:** LoCAL recognizes the importance of improving existing decentralized fiscal systems to channel climate finance. The funds are channeled through national treasuries for further disbursement to the subnational level.

LoCAL has also created a flexible program of learning to understand the needs and priorities of subnational governments. The facility assesses institutional structures around good governance, fiscal management, and country priorities before it determines grant size. This assessment enables LoCAL to adjust funds for local governments based on their ability to meet minimum criteria and financial absorption capacity.

*Sources:* UNCDF n.d.; De Coninck et al. 2021.

## SIRF Fund from the government of Antigua and Barbuda

**About:** A national fund developed by the government of Antigua and Barbuda, SIRF Fund serves as a primary channel for environmental and climate change funding. It was established as a special fund that earmarks income from a range of sources including national park fees and pollution charges to achieve environmental goals.

The SIRF Fund acts as an intermediary that provides access to nongovernmental, public and private sector, and community organizations in Antigua and Barbuda as well as other islands in the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. The fund employs a range of mechanisms including small and medium loans, debt-for-nature swaps, insurance, and a revolving fund.

**Timeframe:** 2006–present

**Funding information:** Various bilateral and multilateral sources—such as the World Bank, Global Environment Facility, United Nations Development Programme, and Caribbean Biodiversity Fund—provide funding, which varies by instrument. Small and medium loans, for example, are channeled via credit unions and banks starting at a 3 percent interest rate.

**How it is different from business as usual:** The SIRF Fund is mandated under the Environmental Protection and Management Act of 2015 to provide streamlined, coordinated environment- and climate-related finance to reduce the need for multiple intermediaries.

The fund has a range of financing mechanisms that accommodate different sectoral needs and target groups at various scales. Revolving funds provide concessional loans to vulnerable populations that cannot typically access finance from traditional banks.

*Sources:* SIRF Fund n.d.-a, n.d.-b.

## Shramik Bharti community grain banks in North India

**About:** Shramik Bharti is a grassroots nonprofit organization that supports communities experiencing poverty to identify sustainable ways to support their incomes and improve their quality of life with a particular emphasis on supporting women and other members of groups that have been marginalized.

**Timeframe:** Approximately 2012–present

**Funding information:** HDFC Bank's corporate social responsibility initiative contributes funding for 60 of Shramik Bharti's community grain banks.

**How it is different from business as usual:** Shramik Bharti's community grain banks help farmers adopt more climate-resilient farming practices and provide support to farmers and their families coping with the impacts of climate change on crops and their livelihoods. In addition to building the adaptive capacity of farmers and their families, the initiative creates opportunities for women to become leaders and have decision-making authority, including as managers of the grain banks. The approach focuses on promoting dignity and meeting the needs of local smallholder farmers. Shramik Bharti organizes awareness events and conducts needs assessments to help prioritize the needs of the community.

The community grain banks are one of many initiatives Shramik Bharti facilitates supporting locally driven economic and climate resilience. Others include locally driven solutions to water resources management challenges and the development of community-driven, self-sustained self-help groups and federations.

*Sources:* Shramik Bharti n.d.; Narayan 2019; Kanpur Online n.d.; Gupta 2021; Krishna 2021.

## APPENDIX B: PRINCIPLES FOR LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

Empowering local stakeholders to lead in adaptation gives communities on the front lines of climate change a voice in decisions that directly affect their lives and livelihoods. Shifting power to local stakeholders, without expecting them to shoulder the burden of adaptation, can catalyze adaptation that is effective, equitable, and transparent. While not all adaptation needs to be locally owned or led, countries and local stakeholders are demanding greater initiative on this and committing to putting more resources into local hands for local adaptation priorities.

The Principles for Locally Led Adaptation described below are intended to guide the adaptation community as it moves programs, funding, and practices toward adaptation action that is increasingly owned by local partners.

### Devolving decision-making to the lowest appropriate level

Most **business-as-usual** climate adaptation planning still happens at the international and national levels, away from the local realities of climate change impacts. Local actors and institutions participate on the margins of adaptation decisions. While most adaptation planning processes employ consultation and multistakeholder engagement, local communities are often excluded from having ownership over the adaptation interventions intended for them.

Shifting toward **business unusual** and more locally led adaptation means the people most impacted by climate change are empowered to lead the prioritization, design, implementation, and evaluation of more adaptation initiatives. This business-unusual approach sends more adaptation finance directly to local actors and gives them more decision-making power over their adaptation process. Where it is more appropriate for international or national institutions to lead adaptation, local actors must have a genuine voice.

### Addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, people living with disabilities, the displaced, Indigenous peoples, and marginalized ethnic groups

Risk at the local level is influenced by structural, economic, and political inequalities. This may include discrimination, exclusion, and persecution due to gender, age, political affiliation, economic status, caste, linguistic group, ethnicity, religion, economic status, or cultural factors. These factors can determine exposure to hazards and can influence coping and adaptive capacities. Most **business-as-usual** adaptation initiatives merely engage the proximate causes of risk—such as hazard or exposure—as opposed to these underlying drivers and are focused on designing the infrastructure for risk reduction without engaging in underlying inequalities.

**Business unusual** means facilitating locally led adaptation interventions that engage with these structural issues underpinning risk. They concretely integrate gender-based, economic, and political inequalities at the core of activities and ensure women, youth, children, the disabled, the displaced, In-

igenous peoples, and excluded ethnic groups are able to meaningfully participate in and lead adaptation decision-making processes. One way to do this is to provide exclusive streams of finance for action led by these groups.

### Providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily

**Business-as-usual** adaptation funding is usually delivered as “project finance” with short time horizons and arduous processes to access it. This requires a high level of technical expertise mostly held by international actors and intermediaries, not local institutions.

**Business-unusual** adaptation finance is provided over time frames long enough to build sustainable institutions and capacities at the local level (seven years or longer). It offers patient support to ensure communities can effectively influence adaptation processes and enable adaptive management so new climate information, skills, and innovations can be incorporated into locally led adaptation actions over time. This funding is predictable, allowing local actors to take risks and change behavior. It is also more easily accessible to local actors—acknowledging that local actors may not be fluent in existing proposal development practices—by addressing structural capacity imbalances in the aid system, such as through multistakeholder partnerships, video submissions for finance, and more emphasis on the risk of not investing.

### Investing in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy

In **business-as-usual** adaptation, local institutions are often used as “implementers” or “conduits” for adaptation activities and there is scant focus on their institutional capacity development. This results in a lack of institutional agency and ability to play a decisive role in climate action after projects conclude, as funders and other intermediary organizations do not usually invest in institutions with low or no track record in managing climate finance.

**Business-unusual** adaptation builds the capabilities of local actors to lead on adaptation interventions and, where needed, develops new institutional structures at the local level to ensure local leadership on adaptation after project funding ends. This includes building these institutions’ capacities to understand climate risks and uncertainties, generate solutions, and facilitate and manage adaptation initiatives. Local institutions should also have the fiduciary and management capacity to provide grants and loans to other local actors for adaptation actions. Having these measures in place ensures that short-term investments in adaptation can contribute to an enabling environment where adaptation action is sustained after project finance runs out.

## Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty

As the dangers of an exclusive reliance on scientific knowledge are now well understood, decisions to mitigate climate risks should ideally be informed through a convergence of scientific and local, traditional, Indigenous, and generational knowledge. However, **business-as-usual** adaptation decision-making is not commonly based on the convergence of local generational and scientific data, but instead biased toward approaches that employ top-down climate risk assessments using historical climate data and climate projections to predict the future.

**Business-unusual** adaptation means commencing adaptation from local, traditional, Indigenous, and generational knowledge, using bottom-up climate risk assessments that build from local communities' understanding of climate risk and resilience pathways. Integrating these bottom-up climate risk assessments with scientific knowledge and climate scenarios tests appropriate low-regret adaptation options and produces robust adaptation strategies.

## Flexible programming and learning

Locally led adaptation efforts must be able to shift tactics and approaches in tandem with changes in the operational environment. This “adaptive management” approach to programming ensures that the inherent uncertainty surrounding climate change can be addressed. However, under **business-as-usual** adaptation, practical examples of adaptive management are scarce and program managers are unable to shift timelines, budgets, and outputs substantially, while the requirements for co-finance and access modalities remain high.

**Business unusual** means adaptation funding is provided with sufficient flexibility to support adaptive program management. Budgets for locally led adaptation initiatives can adjust to changing circumstances to allow locally led adaptation to prioritize and adjust to learnings as they emerge, especially through peer-to-peer knowledge exchanges. Donors and intermediary organizations must support robust monitoring and learning systems that can iteratively gauge the progress of adaptation and enable learning from the context in which interventions unfold.

## Ensuring transparency and accountability

To ensure that local actors and institutions can lead adaptation initiatives, the process of financing, designing, and delivering programs needs to be transparent. Under **business as usual**, it is unknown how much adaptation finance reaches or is controlled by local actors. Non-local actors—who are accountable to donors, not communities—lead the development of the financing arrangements, program design, governance structures, and adaptation delivery mechanisms that are often not shared meaningfully with communities. Where available, this information is often in formats and languages that are alien to local actors and institutions.

**Business unusual** means donors, governments, intermediaries, and other adaptation implementers make their governance arrangements and financial allocations publicly accessible—down to the local level—so local communities know how much finance is available and how it is being distributed across activities and budget lines. Communities have a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of adaptation programs, as well as of the delivery mechanisms, decision-making roles, and governance structures. Community members are involved in key decision-making mechanisms and evaluation and learning activities, using downwardly accountable and participatory approaches that account for power imbalances.

## Collaborative action and investment

No single program or investment can address all climate risks in each context. It is therefore crucial that there is coordination and convergence among locally led adaptation initiatives led by a variety of actors. **Business as usual** shows global climate funds making only sporadic attempts at coordination, national focal points that are at times not empowered to effect convergence, and institutions delivering local adaptation programs that are burdened by parallel accountability systems.

**Business unusual** means international institutions supplying adaptation finance converge on simple investment (funding aims) criteria, readiness (capacity building), accreditation (funding access) processes, and accountability mechanisms to avoid creating parallel systems accountable to different funding bodies. National focal points and institutions coordinate local action and investment. To maximize synergies at the local level, there is a need for greater collaboration across sectors and coordination of initiatives that have the potential to contribute to climate change adaptation, such as those aimed at humanitarian relief, public health, livelihoods, and agriculture. This is especially important in the context of a green recovery from COVID-19 where initiatives will need to tackle integrated threats and opportunities to build resilience to a range of shocks and stresses.

Sources: WRI n.d.; Soanes et al. 2021.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CADPI</b>	Centro para la Autonomía y Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas
<b>CANARI</b>	Caribbean Natural Resources Institute
<b>CCCF</b>	County Climate Change Fund (Kenya)
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change)
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organization
<b>GCF</b>	Green Climate Fund
<b>ICCCAD</b>	International Centre for Climate Change and Development
<b>IIED</b>	International Institute for Environment and Development
<b>LAPA</b>	Local Adaptation Plans of Action
<b>LLA</b>	locally led adaptation
<b>MCT</b>	Micronesia Conservation Trust
<b>MGNREGS</b>	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
<b>MSME</b>	Micro, small, and medium enterprises
<b>NAPA</b>	National Adaptation Programme of Action
<b>NGO</b>	nongovernmental organization
<b>SGF</b>	Small Grants Facility
<b>SIRF</b>	Sustainable Island Resource Framework (of Antigua and Barbuda)
<b>SSN</b>	SouthSouthNorth
<b>SSP</b>	Swayam Shikshan Prayog
<b>VTE</b>	Village Tree Enterprise
<b>YEU</b>	YAKKUM Emergency Unit

## ENDNOTES

1. Unless otherwise cited, the sources for information about the 21 LLA examples are the organizations directly involved in funding, implementing with, or supporting local organizations whose work has been featured. This information was communicated primarily through live or recorded presentations at the dialogues.
2. The authors decided to prioritize Principle 1, as devolved decision-making power is essential to LLA, and Principle 2, to promote learnings on social equity from the case examples and ensure that the example met at least one of these two principles—along with others—before being included.
3. This research focused on understanding approaches to delivering locally led processes. It did not focus on the outcomes or impacts of these processes, as this information was not consistently available across the cases and was outside the scope of the research.

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## ABOUT WRI

World Resources Institute is a global research organization that turns big ideas into action at the nexus of environment, economic opportunity, and human well-being.

### Our Challenge

Natural resources are at the foundation of economic opportunity and human wellbeing. But today, we are depleting Earth's resources at rates that are not sustainable, endangering economies and people's lives. People depend on clean water, fertile land, healthy forests, and a stable climate. Livable cities and clean energy are essential for a sustainable planet. We must address these urgent, global challenges this decade.

### Our Vision

We envision an equitable and prosperous planet driven by the wise management of natural resources. We aspire to create a world where the actions of government, business, and communities combine to eliminate poverty and sustain the natural environment for all people.

### Our Approach

#### COUNT IT

We start with data. We conduct independent research and draw on the latest technology to develop new insights and recommendations. Our rigorous analysis identifies risks, unveils opportunities, and informs smart strategies. We focus our efforts on influential and emerging economies where the future of sustainability will be determined.

#### CHANGE IT

We use our research to influence government policies, business strategies, and civil society action. We test projects with communities, companies, and government agencies to build a strong evidence base. Then, we work with partners to deliver change on the ground that alleviates poverty and strengthens society. We hold ourselves accountable to ensure our outcomes will be bold and enduring.

#### SCALE IT

We don't think small. Once tested, we work with partners to adopt and expand our efforts regionally and globally. We engage with decision-makers to carry out our ideas and elevate our impact. We measure success through government and business actions that improve people's lives and sustain a healthy environment.



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