



EFFECTIVE

EQUITABLE

EFFICIENT

SUSTAINABLE

LOCAL AGENCY

INTERSECTIONAL JUSTICE

ACCESSIBLE RESPONSIVE

LOCALLY LED

ADAPTATION

BRIEFING PAPER

ACCOUNTABLE

CONTEXT SPECIFIC

INCLUSIVE

BOTTOM UP

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INTRODUCTION ¹

Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) has emerged from decades of development and climate change adaptation work that has increasingly begun to recognise the need for bottom-up, inclusive, and context-specific approaches. LLA refers to an approach that centres local people’s individual and collective agency throughout the adaptation cycle, from assessment planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. It ensures that risk management mechanisms align with local contexts, are embedded in local institutions, deliver high returns on investment, and yield outcomes that are more equitable than traditional ‘business as usual’ approaches.²

Climate change impacts are inherently local, shaped by the complex interplay of climatic shifts, environmental conditions and socioeconomic realities on the ground. An arid area with irrigation infrastructure, for instance, may be less affected by rainfall variability than one without, while two agricultural zones might experience differing climate risks depending on local practices and resources. This high degree of differentiated effects means that sub-national actors, such as local governments, Indigenous peoples and local communities, are often best placed to design and implement adaptation interventions which address unique place-based factors and reflect local priorities.

This paper reviews the prospects for LLA alongside a review of the principles, national instruments, institutions, finance, ‘cross-cutting factors’ of equity, inclusion and climate justice and the potential of faith and faith-based actors towards realising just and effective climate action for the world’s most vulnerable populations. It concludes with an examination of the risks and barriers, and way they may be overcome.

¹ AI tools have been used to assist with ordering, phrasing and formatting of this document..

² <https://www.adaptationcommunity.net/climate-risk-assessment-management/what-is-climate-risk-management-crm-and-which-steps-does-it-include-2/>

THE FUTURE IS LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

LLA is increasingly recognised as a vital pathway for effective, equitable, and sustainable climate resilience. Its future, however, depends on overcoming persistent barriers, shifting entrenched power dynamics, and securing broad political and financial support.

Many 'developing' countries, particularly those in the Global South, actively champion LLA as a cornerstone of their climate adaptation strategies. Nations such as Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Ethiopia, and the Pacific Island States have embedded LLA principles within their National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). These countries emphasise the critical role of grassroots communities, Indigenous peoples, and local governments in shaping adaptive responses tailored to their unique socioenvironmental contexts. For instance, the Pacific Islands Forum has highlighted LLA as essential for safeguarding vulnerable communities amid rising sea levels and climate shocks.

Despite this momentum, there remains reluctance towards fully embracing LLA due to concerns around institutional capacity, fiduciary risks, and political control. In several middle-income countries and donor nations, national governments and agencies remain hesitant to cede decision-making power and financial control to sub-national or local actors, citing concerns about accountability, governance, and the scalability of locally-driven projects. This hesitancy often reflects broader tensions around sovereignty, resource allocation, and existing bureaucratic structures.



Islamic Relief Somalia's Building Resilience & Adaptation to Climate Change project

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADVANCE LLA

To realise the transformative potential of LLA and address existing barriers, the following recommendations are critical for policymakers, funders, and practitioners:

Reform climate finance mechanisms

- Instigate a comprehensive review of funding mechanisms and processes to facilitate the exponential expansion of LLA globally.
- Simplify eligibility and application processes to increase accessibility for informal and grassroots actors.
- Increase flexibility in budget rules to allow local actors to cover overheads and adapt project plans as needed.
- Shift donor risk tolerance to accommodate the realities of community-based adaptation.

Enhance direct community access and control

- Support the establishment and strengthening of local financing entities and community-based organisations to directly receive and manage adaptation funds.
- Promote mechanisms that foster transparency and accountability at the local level.
- Identify and facilitate trusted intermediaries to develop capacity and structures that support locally-led climate action.

Prioritise inclusive participation

- Ensure diverse local voices – including women, young people, Indigenous peoples, disabled people and other members of marginalised groups – have meaningful leadership roles in adaptation planning and implementation.
- Develop context-specific indicators built around local definitions of success, resilience and accountability.

Build local capacity and governance systems

- Invest in capacity building that empowers local actors with skills in financial management, project design, monitoring and advocacy.
- Encourage local governance models that recognise and involve credible local institutions and social networks.

Promote climate justice in policy and practice

- Frame LLA within a climate justice agenda that recognises adaptation finance as a right owed to vulnerable communities, not a mere investment opportunity.
- Ensure that adaptation initiatives explicitly address power imbalances and promote equitable resource distribution.

Strengthen multi-level coordination

- Foster collaborative frameworks that align national policies with local adaptation needs and priorities, while maintaining local autonomy.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange between local actors, national governments and international stakeholders to scale lessons without compromising local relevance and suitability.

Support research and monitoring innovations

- Develop participatory and locally relevant monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL) systems that capture diverse outcomes beyond donor-centric metrics.
- Invest in research that documents the effectiveness and challenges of LLA approaches across contexts.

PRINCIPLES FOR LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

Alongside the efforts of the Global Commission on Adaptation (GCA), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and World Resources Institute (WRI) have produced in-depth policy studies to promote LLA. In 2020, through a co-design process under the GCA, they formulated eight Principles for Locally Led Adaptation, based on the knowledge and lived experience of over 50 partners.

The Principles for LLA have gained widespread traction in academic and policy circles and are now supported by over 130 government and non-government institutions. For example, the Government of Nepal is committed to channelling at least 80 per cent of its adaptation funding to the local level, while the UK government is slowly integrating LLA into its investments, notably through the £275 million Climate Action for a Resilient Asia initiative, which aims to empower vulnerable communities to lead their own adaptation efforts.

<p>1. Devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level</p>			<p>2. Addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, people with disabilities and displaced people, Indigenous Peoples and marginalised ethnic groups</p>
<p>3. Providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily</p>			<p>4. Investing in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy</p>
<p>5. Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty</p>			<p>6. Flexible programming and learning</p>
<p>7. Ensuring transparency and accountability</p>			<p>8. Collaborative action and investment</p>
<p>Giving local institutions and communities more direct access to finance and decision-making power over how adaptation actions are defined, prioritised, designed and implemented; how progress is monitored; and how success is evaluated.</p>			<p>Integrating gender-based, economic and political inequalities that are root causes of vulnerability into the core of adaptation action, and encouraging vulnerable and marginalised individuals to meaningfully participate in and lead adaptation decisions.</p>
<p>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.</p>			<p>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.</p>
<p>Informing adaptation decisions through a combination of local, Indigenous and scientific knowledge that can enable resilience under a range of future climate scenarios.</p>			<p>Enabling adaptive management to address the inherent uncertainty in adaptation, especially through robust monitoring and learning systems, and flexible finance and programming.</p>
<p>Making processes of financing, designing and delivering programmes more transparent and accountable downward to local stakeholders.</p>			<p>Collaboration across sectors, initiatives and levels to ensure that different initiatives and different sources of funding (humanitarian assistance, development, disaster risk reduction, green recovery funds and so on) support one another and their activities avoid duplication, to enhance efficiencies and good practice.</p>

The Eight Principles of LLA Source: IIED

The significance of LLA lies in its ability to:

- increase the effectiveness of adaptation by responding to highly localised, multi-dimensional stresses and incorporating diverse priorities
- enhance efficiency by leveraging existing institutional frameworks, mobilising local co-financing (time, labour, expertise), and encouraging investments that yield multiple co-benefits
- deliver equitable gains by shifting accountability from funders to beneficiaries, enabling local actors to scrutinise investments, reduce corruption, and ensure fairness.

LLA thus offers a pathway to reach the most vulnerable, integrate diverse adaptation concerns, build inclusive local financing mechanisms and redirect investment flows toward community-defined priorities. LLA and localisation are becoming key issues at global platforms for climate action, reinforcing the urgent need for systemic reforms to embed local leadership at the heart of the global climate adaptation response.

<i>Characteristics of successful LLA initiatives</i>	
Characteristic	Example
Addressing underlying drivers of vulnerability	Bangladesh’s adaptation programmes have linked poverty reduction, food security, and healthcare access to enhanced climate resilience
Community-led innovation	In the Philippines, local knowledge guides water resource management and community-based early warning systems
Decentralised governance	Nepal’s decentralised administrative framework empowers local management of natural resources and climate adaptation, despite ongoing challenges in coordination and capacity
Overcoming social and behavioural barriers	Uganda’s initiatives addressing gender inequality and social exclusion have bolstered local adaptive capacity

At negotiations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its annual Conference of Parties (COP), the integration of LLA continues to be a topic of robust discussion. While there is growing consensus on the importance of local action, parties emphasise the need for frameworks that balance local empowerment with transparent oversight and alignment with national adaptation priorities. UNFCCC bodies, including the Adaptation Committee and the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), increasingly encourage Parties to enhance support for LLA through capacity building, finance, and knowledge sharing, while respecting the diversity of national circumstances.

ROLE OF LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION IN CLIMATE POLICY INSTRUMENTS

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)

NDCs form the cornerstone of the Paris Agreement, outlining each country's climate mitigation and adaptation commitments. NDCs must be updated every five years with increasing ambition (referred to as the 'ratcheting mechanism'), with progress reported via biennial transparency reports under the Paris Agreement's Enhanced Transparency Framework.

Article 7.5 of the Paris Agreement emphasises a participatory, gender-responsive and transparent approach by stating that adaptation action should be based on and guided by 'traditional knowledge, knowledge of Indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems, with a view to integrating adaptation into relevant socioeconomic and environmental policies and actions, where appropriate.' This provides the legal grounding and imperative for the inclusion of LLA in NDCs. Furthermore, UNFCCC's Technical Expert Group (TEG) on Adaptation Metrics and Adaptation Committee encourage parties to enhance adaptation components through inclusive participatory processes that elevate local voices. The NDC Partnership's Enhancing NDC Implementation Toolkit emphasises including vulnerable groups and local institutions to ensure adaptive measures are contextually relevant and inclusive.

Countries such as [Uganda \(2022 NDC Update\)](#) have already begun adopting these guidelines by embedding community-based adaptation and decentralising implementation roles to local governments.

"To directly support adaptation action, the government is currently implementing a Locally Led Adaptation Programme through initiatives like LoCAL and LifeAR.³ Development partners including Belgium, Denmark, the EU, and Ireland have committed close to USD 40 million annually. This programme reflects our commitment to ensuring adaptation finance reaches the most vulnerable communities through decentralised and inclusive approaches."

Patriciah Roy Akullo, Representative of the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury, Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), Uganda

Similarly, [Kenya's 2025 NDC](#) explicitly pledges support for LLA initiatives, while [Vietnam](#) has committed to developing community-based climate change adaptation models. [Bangladesh's NDC 3.0](#) seeks reform of local government towards the inclusion of community-based organisations, women, people with disabilities and young people in the implementation of LLA. Sri Lanka talks of promoting LLA and enterprise development, especially in rural and underserved regions in its 2025 NDC. [Somalia's 'third generation' NDC](#) highlights adaptation efforts designed to reduce fragility and support stability in displacement-prone areas through 'localised solutions that build community resilience.' Nepal will utilise LLA initiatives to enhance water supply according to its [2025 NDC](#).

By embedding LLA in NDCs, countries are able to move beyond top-down strategies towards context-specific, people-centred adaptation which reflects locally priorities and vulnerabilities. Moreover, countries which embrace LLA are more likely to attract international support and finance as donors increasingly seek localisation metrics in NDC implementation support.

³ LoCAL Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility, LifeAR Least Developed Countries Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience

National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)

NAPs provide a structured framework to address medium and long-term climate adaptation needs. The UNFCCC Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG) has been instrumental in promoting LLA through its Technical Guidelines for the National Adaptation Plan Process (2012; updated 2022, 2025). These guidelines explicitly call for linking adaptation planning at the national and subnational level, as well as collaboration with community-based organisations and local institutions to facilitate inclusive stakeholder engagement, decentralised governance, gender-responsive approaches and integration of Indigenous knowledge. Moreover, the [‘vertical integration’ approach of the NAP Global Network](#), which links national and sub-national efforts, systematically supports LLA through multi-level governance. Integrating LLA into NAPs increases the legitimacy and ownership of adaptation actions, enables flexible and adaptive management in dynamic local conditions and improves the contextual accuracy of vulnerability assessments.

Local and community action in National Adaptation Plans

All 74 NAPs submitted by January 2026, mention local and/or community action. Countries leading in LLA integration within their NAPs – such as Bangladesh, Nepal, Kenya, the Philippines and Lesotho, – have operationalised these guidelines by:

- conducting participatory vulnerability assessments at the local level (LEG guidelines recommend iterative, inclusive assessments). An example of this is Malawi, which includes participatory vulnerability assessments and local empowerment in its [NAP](#). [Indonesia](#) prioritises capacity and participation measures and commits to ‘expanding locally led resilience initiatives’
- strengthening local government capacity and coordination mechanisms, aligning with the LEG’s recommendation to ‘build institutional frameworks that empower sub-national actors.’ [Ghana](#) and [Colombia](#) are among the countries which have begun aligning municipal planning systems with NAP priorities using LLA-informed tools. [Lebanon](#) cites LLA to ‘empower local authorities and communities in adaptation planning and implementation’
- incorporating Indigenous and traditional knowledge systems, as supported by the Santiago Network on Loss and Damage, established under the UNFCCC’s COP25 decision to facilitate community-led knowledge exchange. For instance, Ethiopia’s NAP emphasises [community-level adaptation strategies and gender-responsive local actions](#). [Grenada’s updated NAP](#) plans to engage all stakeholders in forest management and apply LLA solutions.

National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs)

NAPAs, among the first formal adaptation planning instruments, constitute early examples of the LLA approach which have laid the groundwork for further LLA by emphasising urgent, community-based, and participatory adaptation actions. For instance, in Bangladesh, early NAPA projects have included flood resilient housing and saline-tolerant crops, designed with local community input. The lessons learned from NAPAs, such as the importance of flexible project design and the need for simplified funding channels, remain critical when considering LLA projects.

Entry points for LLA across policy issues

The UNFCCC guidance documents identify several critical entry points where LLA can enhance adaptation outcomes.

Agriculture and food security	The LEG's Adaptation Planning Technical Paper No. 6 highlights local seed banks and community-managed irrigation as practical interventions. Further entry points include participatory planning for climate-smart agriculture, or farmer-led innovation in climate resilient practices, such as agroecology or permaculture
Water resource management	The NAP Technical Guidelines promote decentralised water governance, encouraging local watershed management informed by community participation. Localised flood and drought risk assessment, and community-led watershed management and catchment restoration are further encouraged
Disaster risk reduction	The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, endorsed by the UNFCCC through COP decisions, encourages community-based early warning systems and participatory hazard mapping
Ecosystem-based adaptation	The Adaptation Committee's Technical Paper on Ecosystem-based Approaches (2019) advocates for community-led restoration and sustainable land management as cornerstones of resilient landscapes
Health	The Health Component of the UNFCCC Adaptation Framework stresses mobilising local health workers and integrating climate risk into local health planning. Moreover, leveraging local knowledge on herbal medicine and nutrition constitutes a further entry point
Urban resilience	Community-led upgrading of housing and drainage systems, neighbourhood-based climate risk mapping, and local budgeting processes for adaptation infrastructure form some of the key entry points
Gender equality and social inclusion	The Gender Action Plan (GAP) and UAE-Belem Work Programme promoted participatory gender assessments and action planning, ensuring women's leadership in adaptation committees, and tailoring adaptation to differentiated vulnerabilities
Governance	The UNFCCC's NAP Global Network promotes decentralisation as a key governance entry point, encouraging transparent local decision-making and financing mechanisms
Long term adaptation planning	The Adaptation Committee recommends community based adaptation approaches and recognises inclusion of the local community as essential

UNFCCC Bodies supporting LLA

- **Adaptation Committee (AC):** Provides technical support and guidance to countries on adaptation planning and implementation, encouraging inclusive and locally driven approaches.
- **Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG):** Supports LDCs with NAP preparation and implementation, emphasising community participation and local capacity building.
- **Standing Committee on Finance (SCF):** Assesses climate finance flows to ensure funds reach local actors and support LLA.
- **Paris Committee on Capacity-building (PCCB):** Works to enhance the capacity of local actors, governments, and institutions to implement adaptation actions.
- **Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP):** Provides space for sharing knowledge and best practices related to Indigenous and local communities' roles in adaptation.

Biennial Transparency Reports (BTRs)

Under Article 13 of the Paris Agreement, every two years, all parties must submit BTRs detailing progress on adaptation and mitigation, including how local actions are integrated. Increasingly, reports include indicators or narratives about community engagement and local capacity development.⁴ In turn, LLA strengthens BTRs by contributing locally relevant adaptation data from community-level assessments and context-specific indicators of success, participatory MEAL systems which enhance the transparency of BTR submissions, strong equity and inclusion metrics and assessment of local-level finance flows.

Instrument	Role of LLA	Notable country examples	UNFCCC bodies monitoring/supporting
NDCs	Include community participation, Indigenous knowledge, decentralised plans	Kenya, Nepal, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Uganda, Rwanda, Fiji, Suriname, Mozambique	AC, SCF, PCCB, LCIPP, Secretariat
NAPs	Engage local actors in planning, subnational implementation	Ethiopia, Malawi, Suriname, Mozambique	LEG, AC
NAPAs	Early examples and lessons learned	Bangladesh, Mozambique & many others (LDCs)	LEG, AC
NCQG	Embed LLA principles in national quality standards	Varies across national guidelines	AC, LCIPP

Table: Summary of LLA in policy instruments

Embedding LLA within global climate policy instruments, backed by UNFCCC guidance, not only strengthens national climate commitments but also ensures adaptation is grounded in the realities and priorities of the communities most vulnerable to climate change. This alignment between local action and international frameworks enhances effectiveness, equity and resilience across scales.

⁴ For instance Lebanon's First Biennial Transparency Report

EXISTING EFFORTS ON LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

The development of LLA builds on a long lineage of locally-led practices, particularly across Least Developed Countries. These practices include community-based adaptation (CBA) initiatives led by BRAC, and locally driven programmes promoted by the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) in Bangladesh.

The Global Commission on Adaptation's landmark 2019 report, *Adapt Now*,⁵ emphasised that local communities, often the most innovative and active in developing climate solutions, lack adequate access to the resources and power needed to implement their ideas effectively. Drawing on extensive evidence and practical experience, *Adapt Now* helped catalyse global political momentum toward embedding LLA as a central paradigm in climate adaptation.

In recent years, LLA has gained momentum as a practical and equity-based response to the climate crisis, with growing support from governments, multilateral institutions, civil society, and donors. These efforts aim to shift power, resources, and decision-making toward local actors who are best positioned to identify context-appropriate solutions and build long-term resilience.

A diverse coalition of organisations is shaping the global LLA landscape through advocacy, implementation, technical assistance, and policy support.

Think tanks, policy leaders, and grassroots networks

- **Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA)** takes forward the Global Commission on Adaptation's action tracks including LLA with a Global Hub aiming to empower local governments and communities through the provision of additional resources and capacity; and to scale up LLA best practices by influencing adaptation and development investments.
- **International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)** has played a central role in conceptualising and advancing LLA, developing frameworks, metrics, and convening platforms like CBA Conferences that prioritise local leadership and local voices.
- **World Resources Institute (WRI)** works on tracking finance flows to the local level and advocates for policy reform for inclusive governance. It supports an LLA Community of Practice and the Adaptation Action Coalition LLA Workstream, working to bring community-based solutions to the attention of governments and local knowledge and expertise into climate discussions and finance.
- **International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)** under its NAP Global Network has researched and supported countries' vertical integration of adaptation action, including locally-led initiatives.

⁵ https://gca.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/GlobalCommission_Report_FINAL.pdf

- **Slum Dwellers International (SDI), Huairou Commission, and Climate Justice Resilience Fund (CJRF)** are grassroots networks and funders that champion the voices of women, Indigenous Peoples, and poor people living in urban areas in designing and implementing adaptation solutions.
- **International Centre for Climate Change & Development (ICCCAD)**. This leading Global South think tank's LLA programme generates research on the successes and failures of local leadership, enables inclusion, and engages with practitioners to understand the Principles of LLA in their own contexts. ICCAD manages the annual Gobeshona Conference on LLA.
- **Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN)** works to mobilise knowledge, leadership and capacity in the Global South from local to global levels to improve the wellbeing of the most climate-affected people, especially marginalised groups, through transformative climate-resilient action.
- **weADAPT**, developed and maintained by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), is a knowledge exchange on climate change adaptation issues.
- **International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** declare that 'predictable and early' should be the default approach to channelling climate finance for adaptation, and its Climate Charter commits signatories to action guided by the leadership and experience of local actors and communities in the design, management, implementation and evaluation of their programmes.⁶
- **CGIAR** is a global research partnership for a food-secure future dedicated to transforming food, land, and water systems in a climate crisis.

Multilateral and UN-linked institutions

- **Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG)** develops technical guidelines emphasising stakeholder inclusion and local engagement in NAPs and NAPAs.
- **UNFCCC Adaptation Committee** includes locally led adaptation in one of its priority themes proposed for the 2026 Adaptation Forum.⁷
- **Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP)** and **Standing Committee on Finance (SCF)**: These UNFCCC bodies promote inclusive and decentralised adaptation by elevating Indigenous knowledge and leadership and advocating for improved tracking of local finance flows.
- **Green Climate Fund (GCF)** and **Adaptation Fund**: These adaptation funds support climate finance for LLA efforts, explored in further detail in the section below.
- **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)** in its 2024 Adaptation Gap Report is reminded by the principles of LLA, that for initiatives to be effective and sustainable, they must be grounded in local contexts and realities, with leadership coming from local actors and institutions.

⁶ <https://www.climate-charter.org/>

⁷ https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/AC27_15d_CN_Adaptation%20Forum%202026.pdf

Regional and national institutions

- **African Development Bank (AfDB):** Through its Africa Adaptation Acceleration Program (AAAP), the AfDB emphasises LLA mechanisms which support city and community resilience planning.
- Kenya's **County Climate Change Funds (CCCFs):** A key example of a devolved public finance mechanism, CCCFs enable county governments and communities to co-design and implement climate investments, supported by the Adaptation Consortium and aligned with national policy.
- Nepal's **Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPAs):** Institutionalised as part of its NAP process, LAPAs operationalise LLA through local planning units, integrating climate resilience into development and budgeting at the municipal level.
- Bangladesh's **Local Government Initiative on Climate Change (LoGIC):** This programme channels funds directly to communities to design and implement their own resilience strategies.
- Fiji's **Climate Relocation of Communities Trust Fund:** While national in oversight, this fund places decision-making and power to prioritise in the hands of affected villages, supporting participatory relocation planning.
- **Albania:** UNDP, with funding from the Green Climate Fund, has conducted a project to develop Local Adaptation Plans (LAPs) in eight municipalities facing urgent needs. These plans have been instrumental in aligning local priorities with national objectives, empowering communities, and building resilience.
- **UK Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)** is a signatory of the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation and leads on action (including the LDC Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience (LIFE-AR programme)) supporting local groups, organisations, authorities etc. to adopt adaptive measures at local levels.

These models demonstrate how LLA can be embedded in multi-level governance structures, improving accountability, legitimacy and effectiveness in adaptation responses. The current landscape shows encouraging progress in mainstreaming LLA, with governments, donors and institutions testing scalable models that transfer decision-making power and resources to the local level. However, systemic shifts in funding, policy and capacity are still needed to fully operationalise LLA at scale and ensure that adaptation is inclusive, just and effective.



Islamic Relief Bangladesh's Scaling-up Inclusive Climate Resilience of Vulnerable Communities through Locally Led Adaptation (ICRA) Project

FINANCING LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

Finance is one of the most critical enablers for the effective implementation of LLA. While political will for LLA has grown, financing systems often lag behind in delivering funds that are accessible, predictable and empowering for local actors. Advancing LLA at scale requires not only increasing financial flows but also transforming the systems that govern them.

Despite the widespread acknowledgement of the role of local communities, less than 17 per cent of global climate finance is directed toward building local resilience,⁸ with a very small proportion of that going to Indigenous peoples for their contribution to environmental protection. Such inequity in climate action exacerbates exclusion, perpetuates vulnerability and risks promoting maladaptive strategies that increase hazard exposure or create new risks.

One of the key issues in this regard is that funding remains locked in centralised systems, subject to bureaucratic conditions that exclude the very communities most affected by climate impacts. A prime example in 2025 is the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which, despite its ambition to support vulnerable countries, continues to route the majority of its funding through large international intermediaries, such as multilateral development banks and UN agencies. This centralised structure can create multiple layers of approval, increase transaction costs, and delay funding reaching the ground – especially for community-based organisations with limited administrative capacity.

Advancing LLA at scale requires not just an increase in overall climate finance, but a fundamental transformation in how it is governed and delivered. This means creating financial flows which are predictable, flexible and directly accessible, and which actively shift power to local institutions to lead adaptation efforts on their own terms.

The current landscape of bilateral, multilateral, and philanthropic funders which support LLA as a strategic priority includes:

- **Green Climate Fund (GCF):** Green Climate Fund's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan emphasises scaling up direct access and LLA.⁹ GCF's Locally Led Climate Action approach builds on several components: the eight LLA Principles, GCF policies that support strong safeguarding, GCF's 'patient and flexible' concessional capital, and the fund's experience from the Enhanced Direct Access (EDA) pilot. GCF's (2025) Locally Led Climate Action framework and guidance outlines three parameters for locally led action: devolved decision-making and finance, local ownership and implementation, and sustainable local capacities, and provides guidance for developing and structuring funding proposals.¹⁰
- **Adaptation Fund (AF):** The AF is a frontrunner in LLA financing having adopted the LLA principles in 2021 and in 2024-5 setting US\$26.5 million for funding locally LLA single country projects and programmes.

⁸ UNEP Adaptation Gap Report 2023

⁹ <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/20250422v3-llca-brief-web.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/20251107-llca-guidance-web-1.pdf>

- **World Bank International Development Association:** Locally Led Climate Action activities supported by the World Bank are expected to benefit over 100 million people by 2030. As of 2024, over \$4 billion had been committed to support 20 low-income countries in the Pacific Islands, South Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean with LLCA activities.
- **UN Development Programme (UNDP)'s Adaptation Innovation Marketplace** to bridge the gap between local climate solutions and the global financial community, uses two main programmes: the Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator (UNDP-AFCIA) and the Resilience for Peace and Stability, Food and Water Security Innovation Grant Programme.
- **FCDO (UK):** Through initiatives like the LLA Partnership, CLARE, and BRACC in Malawi, FCDO supports locally designed adaptation planning and delivery, including flexible financing for local governments and civil society.
- **Philanthropic donors:** Organisations such as the Climate Justice Resilience Fund (CJRF), Ford Foundation, Oak Foundation, and Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) fund grassroots organisations and local movements, prioritising justice, gender equality and Indigenous leadership in adaptation.
- **International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Canada and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Step Change** initiative to accelerate equitable and inclusive LLA to climate change in the Global South.

These efforts represent important momentum but are still limited in scale compared to overall global climate finance. While most international climate finance still flows through national governments and multilateral agencies, according to the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (SCF) 'ensuring locally led adaptation interventions is an area that has received increased attention in recent years through multistakeholder initiatives, often based on the principles of locally led adaptation.'¹¹

¹¹ <https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/231120%20BLS23393%20UCC%20Adaptation%20Finance%20v04.pdf>

LLA funding under UNFCCC bodies

- **The 2023 decision on the Global Goal for Adaptation (GGA)** agreed under the UNFCCC emphasises that adaptation action should be based on and guided by Indigenous and local peoples' knowledge systems and locally led and community-based adaptation; and agreed to accelerate swift action towards the objectives of the GGA, from local to global, implementation should take into account participatory approaches.¹²
- **Adaptation Committee's guidance to the COP (2022):** Urges improved access to finance for local and Indigenous communities, with recommendations to simplify application and reporting requirements for small-scale actors.
- **Santiago Network on Loss and Damage:** This network is mandated to facilitate demand-driven technical assistance for countries and communities, especially those facing climate-induced displacement and structural vulnerability. Although SNLD does not explicitly use the term 'locally-led adaptation', its mandate, structure, and operational guidance are strongly compatible with LLA, especially in terms of supporting vulnerable communities, respecting local knowledge, and providing demand-driven technical assistance.
- **Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD)** Established under the auspices of the World Bank, might be expected to contribute to its ambition to 'step up efforts to integrate the LLA principles into its operations.'

Despite these developments, the structure of global finance systems continues to pose access barriers for the very actors LLA seeks to empower.

The Asian Development Bank¹³ has been in the forefront of testing new approaches to finance that give more control and resources directly to local actors, including by trialling devolved financing initiatives such as the World Bank's Pilot Programmes for Climate Resilience (PPCR) in 28 'developing' countries. National governments have pioneered dedicated adaptation funds (e.g. Kenya's County Climate Change Fund, India's National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change). The Green Climate Fund¹⁴ emphasises scaling up direct access and locally led action in its 2024-2027 Strategic Plan and the publication of its *Locally Led framework and guidance* in November 2025.¹⁵ The UNFCCC's Adaptation Fund,¹⁶ having prioritised the promotion of locally based or locally-led adaptation in its 2023-27 Medium Term Strategy, has now drafted indicators for LLA in its results framework.

¹² <https://unfccc.int/documents/626569>

¹³ Patel, S., 'Getting money to the local level: building community resilience through national climate funds', Asian Development Bank technical note, December 2024 <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/1017811/community-resilience-national-climate-funds.pdf>

¹⁴ Green Climate Fund, 'Locally led climate action', Green Climate Fund web article, April 2025, <https://www.greenclimate.fund/document/locally-led-climate-action>

¹⁵ <https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/20251107-llca-guidance-web-1.pdf>

¹⁶ Adaptation Fund, 'Update to the Adaptation Fund strategic results framework', October 2025, https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/AFB.B.45.8-Update-to-the-Strategic-Results-Framework_16Sep2025.pdf

Needs and gaps in financing LLA

Several persistent challenges hinder the scaling of LLA financing:

- **Insufficient direct access:** According to the SCF 2022 Biennial Assessment, only an estimated 6–10 per cent of climate finance reaches the local level directly. Funding often remains trapped in centralised systems, with limited channels for communities or local institutions to access resources independently.
- **Complex accreditation and proposal processes:** Stringent fiduciary standards and proposal requirements discourage smaller, local entities from applying to large climate funds.
- **Lack of flexibility:** Adaptation at the local level requires funding mechanisms that can respond to evolving conditions and priorities. Rigid disbursement schedules and earmarked budgets limit locally adaptive responses.
- **Weak financial infrastructure at the local level:** Many local governments and community organisations lack the capacity to manage large grants, requiring upfront investments in financial management, monitoring, and reporting systems.
- **Limited data and transparency:** There is no standardised global tracking system for how much finance reaches the local level, nor consistent metrics to evaluate whether funding is truly ‘locally led.’

Operationalising LLA finance effectively means that practical mechanisms must be put into place to ensure that funding reaches the local level. Direct Access Modalities allow funds to flow directly to national or subnational entities accredited by international financial institutions – such as the Adaptation Fund’s National Implementing Entities or the Green Climate Fund’s Direct Access Entities – which then work in partnership with local communities. Enhanced Direct Access (EDA), piloted by the GCF and Adaptation Fund, grants these accredited entities more discretion over funding allocation, enabling quicker disbursement and more locally tailored responses. Intermediary organisations – such as NGOs or development banks – also play a vital role by disbursing smaller grants and providing technical support to local groups that may not have direct access to international funds. Blended finance approaches, which combine concessional public funds with private sector investment, constitute another option for mobilising larger capital pools while still addressing local priorities.

Looking to the future, further scaling of LLA requires deliberate shifts in finance architecture, governance systems and capacity building. The financial architecture must become more flexible and decentralised, with multi-tiered funding channels that enable local actors to receive resources directly or through trusted intermediaries familiar with local contexts. This is a role for which Islamic Relief is uniquely equipped where its operations are established in several Asian and African contexts alongside world leading compliance and accountability systems. Immediate climate action funded through intermediaries must also build local capacities. Local actors currently lack the financial management and reporting skills needed to handle larger funding flows. Investments in technical assistance and institutional strengthening are essential to address these gaps. Additionally, partnerships and networks play a key role in scaling efforts – regional platforms and coalitions, such as the African Adaptation Initiative and the South Asian NAP Network, help aggregate local initiatives, facilitate knowledge exchange, pool resources, and strengthen advocacy.

Such steps are not impossible. There are already many examples of flexible financing which aims at strengthening LLA. Some include:

- **Namibia's GCF-Funded Community-Based Adaptation Project:** This project utilises the GCF's Enhanced Direct Access modality, allowing the Namibia National Designated Authority (NDA) to channel resources to local conservancies and community groups managing natural resources and climate risks, with a focus on ecosystem-based adaptation and livelihoods diversification.
- **Philippines' Climate Justice Resilience Fund (CJRF):** A philanthropic-funded initiative that provides flexible grants directly to grassroots groups, Indigenous peoples, and local women's organisations, to implement adaptation activities aligned with their priorities, demonstrating the power of community-led grant making.
- **Kenya's County Climate Change Funds (CCCFs):** These funds enable counties to plan and implement adaptation projects locally with flexible financing. Supported by the Adaptation Consortium and FCDO, the CCCFs demonstrate successful devolution of climate finance with local government leadership and community participation. Counties manage budgets for climate-smart agriculture, water harvesting, and disaster preparedness, with funds disbursed based on local planning.
- **Nepal's Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPAs):** Supported by the UNDP and the Nepalese government, LAPAs operate as decentralised planning and financing units, integrating adaptation into local development planning. Funds flow from national adaptation budgets directly to municipalities and village development committees, enabling context-specific interventions such as flood protection and community forest management.

LLA cannot succeed without the resources to sustain it. As climate impacts accelerate, it is vital that global finance systems evolve to place power and funding where it matters most: with those living with the most immediate impacts of climate breakdown.

LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

Intersectionality is a critical lens for understanding who is most affected by climate change and who is too often excluded from shaping the solutions. Climate impacts do not affect all people equally – they intersect with existing inequalities related to gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and socioeconomic status. These overlapping identities shape how individuals and communities experience risk, access resources, and participate in decision-making processes. To be truly effective, LLA must go beyond decentralising adaptation; it must actively confront and redress systemic power imbalances by embedding equity, inclusion, and climate justice into every aspect of its design and delivery. This is especially true in the realm of climate finance, where historical and structural barriers continue to determine who controls funding, who receives it, and under what conditions. Finance is not neutral – it plays a determining role in who benefits from climate action and who is left behind. In the intersectional debate on climate, it is increasingly evident that financial systems often reproduce inequality rather than redress it. Women, Indigenous peoples, disabled people, young people, and other historically marginalised groups face systemic barriers to accessing climate finance, whether due to restrictive eligibility criteria, lack of legal recognition, or institutional biases embedded within donor frameworks. Without intentional reform, climate finance risks reinforcing exclusion and deepening vulnerability. An intersectional approach to LLA financing requires more than disaggregated data – it demands that financing systems be restructured to prioritise justice, redistribute power, and directly resource those on the frontlines of climate change.

To be truly effective, therefore, LLA approaches must integrate cross-cutting considerations, addressing how climate change intersects with social, economic, and environmental dimensions – particularly through the lenses of equity, inclusion and justice. LLA promotes intersectionality by prioritising:

- **inclusivity in decision-making:** Ensuring women, Indigenous peoples, young people, disabled people, and marginalised communities have meaningful leadership and a voice in adaptation planning and implementation
- **differentiated vulnerability and capacity:** Recognising that climate risks do not affect all groups equally, and designing tailored responses that address specific needs and barriers. For instance, UNFCCC's 2022 Summary of Disability and Climate Change highlights inclusive adaptation strategies for 'persons with disabilities.
- **equity in resource access:** Facilitating equitable distribution of adaptation finance and support to historically underserved and vulnerable communities.

Climate justice remains at the core of LLA, positioning adaptation as a matter of rights, equity, and power redistribution, rather than solely a technical or developmental challenge. This approach emphasises fair and inclusive decision-making processes that empower vulnerable groups in shaping adaptation strategies and accessing resources. It also involves recognising and protecting the identities, knowledge systems, and cultural rights of Indigenous peoples and marginalised communities. LLA seeks to correct the unequal burden of climate impacts by prioritising funding and support for communities most affected by climate change, while also incorporating long-term perspectives that uphold the rights of future generations. A compelling example is the Pacific Climate Warriors movement, which mobilises Indigenous youth across Pacific Island nations to advocate for climate justice through both local adaptation efforts and global campaigns that demand accountability from major polluters and push for fair climate finance.

The strength of LLA lies in its holistic, intersectional approach, integrating the social dimensions of vulnerability with the sectoral priorities set by the Global Goal on Adaptation and policy frameworks such as the UAE-Belem Work Programme. By placing climate justice at the centre, LLA ensures that adaptation is not only more effective, but also equitable and responsive to the realities of those most affected by climate change.

Policy intersections: Integration with UNFCCC work programmes

LLA's principles and practices align closely with several cross-cutting UNFCCC frameworks, notably the Gender Action Plan, UAE-Belem Work Programme and the emerging Urban Agenda.

- **Gender Action Plan (GAP):** LLA promotes gender-responsive adaptation by centring women's leadership and addressing gender-specific climate vulnerabilities. Implementation of the GAP's objectives is enhanced through community-driven approaches that challenge structural inequalities.
- **Urban Agenda (UAE-Belem Work Programme):** As urban areas face increasing climate risks, LLA facilitates locally relevant solutions for informal settlements and marginalised urban communities, linking local governance, inclusive planning, and climate resilience. A key example of this is the Resilience Hub and the 'Resilient Cities' coalition, which supports LLA within urban informal settlements.
- **Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC) Engagement:** LLA advances the rights and knowledge systems of Indigenous peoples and local communities in adaptation, respecting Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and embedding traditional ecological knowledge in policy and practice. For example, in Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula, Maya communities collaborate with government agencies to integrate traditional ecological knowledge into state climate adaptation strategies, ensuring Indigenous leadership and rights are central.

FAITH-BASED ACTORS AND LLA

Faith-based actors are uniquely positioned to bridge policy and grassroots action due to their role in shaping societal values and behaviours. Faith-based actors hold moral authority and social legitimacy, which can be harnessed to influence public opinion, encourage sustainable practices and advocate for climate justice. Their extensive networks allow them to mobilise communities and influence policy. Initiatives such as the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative and Laudato Si' Action Platform, or the 'Faith for Earth' programme by UNEP, and the Interfaith Liaison Committee to the UNFCCC, are examples of LLA-supportive religious engagements which hold massive potential for influence.

Islamic perspectives on environmental stewardship

Islamic environmental ethics are rooted in foundational concepts such as tawhid (oneness of God), khalifa (human stewardship), mizan (balance), and maslahah (public interest). These principles emphasise humanity's responsibility to preserve the environment as a divine trust. The Qur'an describes all creation as signs (ayat) of God, underscoring the sanctity of the natural world. Tawhid refers to the oneness of God, as expressed in the first words in the profession of faith: "There is no God but God." Everything comes from this one source of life and is connected to it, including nature (Arnez, 2014; Dien, 1997; Gada, 2014, pp. 133–34). Muslim environmentalists interpret this principle as clarifying the unity of all creation to which humans belong. This principle is further connected to mizan, describing the universe as harmonious. Moreover, according to Shariah, humans are regarded as the khilafah fil ard (stewards of the Earth). This means that they may utilise the scarce resources of the planet as trustees, and must protect the environment, including animals, birds and insects. These teachings form the basis of Islamic theory with regard to climate change.

The 2015 Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change¹⁷ is a milestone in documenting the contemporary Islamic response to climate change. The document lists six key advocacy asks before concluding with the words of the Prophet (peace be upon him): "The world is sweet and verdant, and verily Allah has made you stewards in it, and He sees how you acquit yourselves."

¹⁷ <https://www.ifees.org.uk/about/islamicdeclaration/>

The role of faith-based actors in LLA

Despite their massive potential, faith and faith-based actors remain underutilised in adaptation efforts. This is a missed opportunity, as their input can contribute to both enhanced efficiency due to the use of existing infrastructures and resources such as mosques, churches and social networks, as well as improved engagement, presence and influence among local communities. Faith actors often hold trusted positions among community members, have close knowledge of communities and hold legitimising power which can be used to support social development.

There is an emerging effort to introduce ethical considerations into the heart of climate negotiations and the implementation of international agreements. The Brazil presidency of COP called for a Global Ethical Stocktake which will bring faith actors together with academics and others to consider progress so far and plans for the future within a morally principled framework. Utilising their shared notions of stewardship, compassion, social justice and equity, and a clear understanding of the metaphysical and spiritual aspects that guide most of the world's population, faith groups can promote LLA as a means of increasing resilience, reducing vulnerability and building capacity.

Moreover, Islamic approaches to LLA provide new avenues for finance, which remains a critical challenge in the facilitation of adaptation. Islamic finance can be seen largely as an asset-based finance that is free from the elements of unjust and speculative gains. It uses a range of tools that create debt, leases, equities and guarantees. Islamic finance has substantial synergies with the green economic concepts and fits in well with the ethical requirements of green projects. As such, environmental protection and sustainability fits in nicely with the Islamic finance agenda that seeks to enhance the general welfare of society. Organisational goals such as the protection of the planet and the environment, climate management adaptation clearly conform to the goals of the Shariah as well as with the UN mandated Sustainable Development Goals.

The integration of Islamic finance tools – such as zakat, sadaqah, waqf, and green sukuk – offers a unique opportunity to expand local finance for adaptation. Compared to conventional finance, Islamic finance offers a much larger range of instruments that are debt-based (e.g. qard, qard with service charge), sale-based (murabahah, muswama, baybi al-thaman al-ajil, salam, istiṣna, istijrar), leasing based (ijarah, ijarah-thummal-bay), and partnership-based (mudarabah, musharakah, mudhara'a). There are also products based on guarantee (kafalah), agency (wakalah) and service charge) that are often combined to design composite products. Green sukuk, for example, provides Shariah-compliant investment instruments for renewable energy, water conservation, and low-carbon technologies.

The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) provides one such example demonstrating the viability of these instruments in financing both mitigation and adaptation across its member countries. In March 2025, the first collaboration between IsDB and the Global Centre on Adaptation was announced for an ambitious climate resilience project aimed at strengthening food security and agricultural value chains in Nigeria.

Locally-led, faith-supported adaptation is not only feasible; it is essential. Incorporating faith-based actors and finance into LLA strategies can dramatically increase outreach, efficiency, and impact. To close the climate adaptation gap, national and international policymakers must move beyond rhetoric and redirect resources and authority to where they are most effective – at the local level. This requires intentional shifts in planning, partnerships and public finance.

BARRIERS AND CRITICISMS OF LOCALLY LED ADAPTATION

While LLA holds significant promise for transforming climate action by centring local knowledge, leadership and priorities, there remain persistent barriers and important critiques that must be acknowledged and addressed to ensure its meaningful and equitable implementation.

Barriers to implementing Locally led adaptation

Research led by IIED, BRAC, ICCCAD, and grassroots organisations in the Global South highlights several systemic barriers that hinder the institutional reform necessary for genuine LLA:

- **Eligibility criteria in funding calls:** Many funding opportunities require formal documentation and legal status that informal sector actors and community groups often lack, excluding them from accessing resources.
- **Complex application processes:** Demanding extensive technical evidence and background information places a heavy administrative burden on local actors, many of whom lack the necessary capacities or resources.
- **Due diligence and risk tolerance:** Donors typically maintain low risk tolerance, leading to stringent due diligence requirements that are difficult for small-scale or informal actors to meet.
- **Finance rules and flexibility:** Rigid restrictions on overhead costs and budget line reallocations limit local actors' ability to cover essential operational expenses or adapt project activities responsively.
- **Monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEAL) frameworks:** Success indicators are often designed around donor priorities rather than locally defined visions of success, undermining locally meaningful outcomes.

Critiques and risks

Despite its transformative potential, LLA is also associated with several risks and criticisms rooted in entrenched power dynamics and institutional constraints.

Although LLA seeks to shift decision-making to the local level, much adaptation finance remains controlled by national governments, international NGOs, and donors who resist relinquishing authority over fund allocation and expenditure. This limits genuine local participation and undermines the development of appropriate, locally grounded monitoring systems. Overcoming this requires a fundamental restructuring of existing institutional norms to enable local actors to directly access and manage funds based on their own priorities, rather than conforming to donor-imposed frameworks.

Moreover, LLA contains the potential to inadvertently entrench inequalities by allowing dominant actors – whether national elites, NGOs, or donor agencies – to control adaptation agendas. Local actors risk being relegated to token participation that does not challenge prevailing economic and cultural hierarchies. For example, funder-driven criteria such as the Green Climate Fund's emphasis on scalability and replicability often prioritise interventions that can be 'scaled up,' sidelining context-specific, transformational local initiatives. Truly transformative adaptation finance must be reimagined through the lens of climate justice which views funds as rights owed to vulnerable communities rather than as investments, and accompanied by transparency, consistency, and the removal of costly intermediaries.

Another risk associated with LLA is the risk of elite capture and neglect of local political economy. Critically, the 'local' is not a homogenous or inherently equitable space. Without careful attention, marginalised groups, including the rural poor and minority communities, may be excluded through local patronage networks or 'participatory exclusion,' where elites control processes and resources. Ambiguity over who constitutes 'local' can facilitate co-option by existing development agendas that may conflict with genuine vulnerability reduction and justice. This calls for nuanced understanding of local contexts and vigilant safeguards against exclusion.

Finally, there is a danger that governments may interpret LLA as an opportunity to withdraw from their obligations to support adaptive capacities, effectively shifting the burden onto local actors to adapt with limited support. This risks undermining systemic, structural change needed to address climate vulnerability comprehensively.

To overcome the barriers and risks facing LLA, a new climate adaptation ecosystem is needed. This requires delegating real authority and control to diverse local actors, ensuring they have direct access to funding and the ability to govern resources according to their own needs. It also means disentangling financial support from donor-centric expectations and conditionalities, so that local priorities, visions, and definitions of success can lead the way. External actors must reframe their roles as facilitators and enablers, offering capacity-building, technical assistance, and advocacy without undermining local agency. Crucially, any delegation of authority must be matched with adequate operational funding to support overhead costs and adaptive project management. Embracing these principles is essential for LLA to deliver on its promise as a just, inclusive and truly transformative approach to climate adaptation.

CONCLUSION

The future of LLA depends on a collective willingness to reimagine how power, finance, and governance are structured in the global response to climate change. This is not simply a technical shift, but a political and moral one – requiring the international community to confront the legacy of exclusion in climate decision-making and to act with urgency and humility. By championing local agency, embedding intersectional justice, and reforming climate finance systems to be more accessible, equitable, and responsive, LLA can move from the margins to the mainstream. In doing so, it holds the potential to transform not only how we adapt to climate impacts, but also how we define resilience, accountability and solidarity in an era of compounding global crises. Now is the time to treat LLA not as an optional innovation, but as a cornerstone of just and effective climate action for the world's most vulnerable populations.

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Registered Company No. 02365572



IRW-2017-004

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