Climate Change Knowledge Exchange: Acting on what we know and how we learn for climate and development policy 5 – 6 March 2013

The Challenge of Climate Change

In order to capture lessons on where learning *is* taking place *and* being acted upon, and to explore challenges that remain, the Climate Change Team at IDS convened the **Climate Change Knowledge Exchange** event, in collaboration with: CCAFS (Climate Change, Agriculture and Food security) Initiative, CDKN (Climate and Development Knowledge Network), DFID (UK Department for International Development) and the GEF EO (Global Environment Facility Evaluation Office).

The Climate Change team at IDS held the knowledge exchange 5–6 March 2013. The exchange explored how learning is (or isn't) taking place in climate and development policy spaces, and whether the knowledge we generate is acted upon. As a complex problem, climate change requires us to work and to learn differently by breaking down disciplinary silos, drawing upon a diversity of perspectives and voices that are linked through a range of brokers and intermediaries that do not play the same role as a 'subject expert'. As a result, in the context of international development, our understanding both of the challenges and of how to shape responses is still emerging and evolving. An increasing number of organisations and actors are reflecting upon this agenda, whilst a range of experiences suggests a mixed bag so far for efforts to translate what we do and do not know about climate change into policy action. The growing attention focussed on these issues provides an opportunity to come together to take stock, share and chart next steps.

The Four Learning Themes

This event brought together four different strands of 'framing cases' which all relate to an overarching learning theme in relation with the focus of the event: 'acting on what we learn for climate and development policy'. Along with other partners we work with, we used this event to share, unpack and reflect upon experiences drawn from specific climate policy-related initiatives that we are working on currently. We explored what is working well, what is not, and how/whether we are learning to do things differently when they do not go according to plan, in relation to the following four key learning themes, each 'owned' by the event organisers/co-sponsors:

1. **Whose knowledge counts? Locally-held knowledge for climate change adaptation (IDS & CCAFS Climate Change Social Learning Sand Box)**
2. **Brokers, translators and intermediaries: new roles and challenges for putting knowledge into practice (IDRC, IDS)**
3. **How to learn from climate change evaluations in and between organizations (CDKN, GEF EO, IDS)**
4. **Extreme events and disaster risk reduction (IDS)**

IDS Institute of Development Studies
gef GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY EVALUATION OFFICE
UKaid from the British people
CDKN Climate & Development Knowledge Network
CGIAR RESEARCH PROGRAM ON Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security
CCAFS

Learning Theme 1: Whose knowledge counts? Locally-held knowledge for climate change

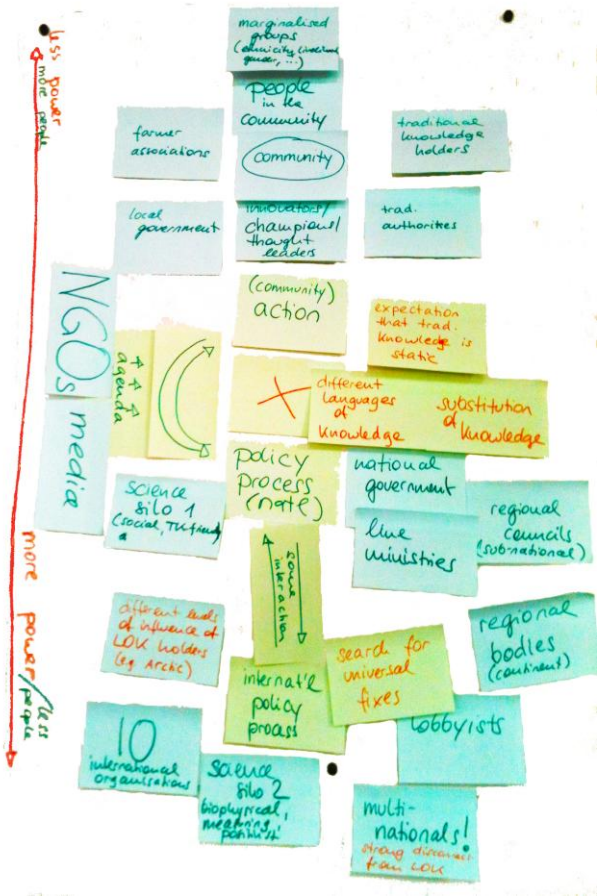
The first session:

A Single Loop Process using Instrumental Learning to Acquire Information

The Exercise:

Three breakout groups gathered, creating visualizations to express the current structures and politics between locally held knowledge and policy processes.

The participants sat down in three working groups to visualize a key issue and a specific case study or situation that frames the context of relationships between locally held knowledge and policy processes. The goal was to look not at what people are doing, but who those people are, and where they are situated in relationship to each other on a scale of power over influencing policy.



Brief Summary of Important Contributions

- Policy makers need to think more about uncertainty of the everyday context of the diverse spectrum of contexts and realities they want to effect. This needs to happen in order to bridge the gap between different kinds of knowledge. There is not enough attention paid to identify with local knowledge, and words or concepts that associate with what Climate Change, when know word exists.
- Power is a central concentration of whose knowledge counts. Needs to be more efforts into understanding ways that residents effected by policy would frame the decision making process and how scientific knowledge fits into that.
- Look at the structures of power not just from a local to a policy level, but on horizontally in local contexts. Doing this analysis on a local level and understanding how unspoken power arrangements function through agencies like the ministries of finance will frame who holds power over locally held knowledge.
- Need a policy analysis of different countries to see if climate compatibility was happening from a community to policy level to share experiences, specifically in South Africa
- Needed to build local institutions, in order to create a policy process on the local level.
- Lack of up scaling of local knowledge; found necessary for policy makers to listen and frame lessons as a positive benefit within local knowledge, juxtaposed with timing to target policy makers.
- Local structures are in place to serve more powerful institutions. This needs to be reversed.
- There is a gap between national policy makers and local level institutions, due to differences in epistemologies.
- There is too much expectation that knowledge is static in the national level policy making process. Where there is less people there is more power in who makes decisions, and where there is more people, there is less power in influence over these decisions.
- Local knowledge holds less weight when there is a discrepancy between locally held knowledge and scientific knowledge. Those with scientific knowledge still hold more influence.
- Knowledge exchange in learning is important with feedback loops to different places and spaces. There is a need for more rich diverse knowledge on the community side, because there is less quality information on the policy level arena.

Brief Summary of Important Contributions

Filters, *creating new spaces co-created by local level 'champions' and key policy makers in decision making processes and how adaptation and mitigation takes place, as well as by whom.*

- A process for filtering different ways of knowing and a triangulation of data across scientific communities, as well as across the plethora of rich data by different local experts in different contexts.
- Processes of decision making in policy emphasizing not just outcomes, but the process of inclusion creation itself.
- More of the ministries accessing and making use of advanced IT and communications technology that resides in communities holding rich data of locally held knowledge.
- A variety of filters that are contextual with processes that are communicating different epistemologies
- Recognizing that levels of policy decision makers and those living in local contexts are not static identities of 'policy maker' or 'holder of indigenous knowledge'; these identities often overlap. The relationships to different types of knowledge and epistemologies are more complex than appears.

Second Session:

A Double Loop Learning Process using Communicative Learning to understand and reinterpret knowledge exchanges from the first session.

The Exercise:

Three breakout groups went through a process of examining the reality they created in the morning session to imagine if all the changes that were seen as necessary what the world would look like in the future. From this future context where all necessary changes occurred to address whose knowledge counts in Climate Policy, the groups worked backwards to today in order to show what it would take to get there.

Knowledge Production, *creating new spaces and mechanisms to co-create knowledge that is co-owned and has a direct influence in Climate Change Policy,*

- Researchers performing research in different ways, using processes that are more inclusive and accessible to residents in local contexts, as well as researchers working cross-professionally.
- A space that is collaborative and well structured that gives local 'champions' more power control the flow of knowledge
- Incentives for research and education on the college and university level to show that local knowledge production is important.
- The way policy works is adaptable and continually changes to reflect the uncertainty of everyday life with knowledge that is never static.

Creating new filters in policy processes and feedback loops is about power, access and respect. Who engages in creating this filter and how it works is an expression of whose knowledge counts.

Pete Cranston