C10: An educated guess: decision making towards adaptation strategies for the most vulnerable

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Summary of themes covered in workshop

There were three 20-minutes talks, each followed by a short questions-answers round, and two short poster presentations in this workshop. The first talk was about a scientist-stakeholder dialogue framework that brings together urban development researchers, decision makers and stakeholders at different societal levels to the end of enhancing the resilience for African cities and lands to today‘s and future climate damages. The second talk reported on the outcomes of a survey carried out on the islands of Tuvalu, Samoa and Tonga on the perception of current as well as anticipated future climate damages caused by, e.g. seawater flooding, tropical cyclones and soil erosion, put the answers into the context of related problems of waste and freshwater management, and touched on climate change adaptation strategies such as building dams, planting tries and building more resilient houses. The third speaker introduced a tool for the cost-benefit analysis of climate damage risks (ECA) developed by David Bresch to assist decision makers in making economically sensible decisions on climate change adaptation and presented its potential for application for the most vulnerable . The poster presentations were about a cost-benefit analysis of options to increase the resilience of farming practice to droughts and floods in Northern Ghana, and on the social science of cooperation within a communal irrigation system used by small-scale farmers in Argentina.

Most controversial question that came up in this workshop?

None

Results of the discussion

The utility, quality and relevance of research strongly increases when scientists go to the field and get in touch with the people targeted by their research. The communication between scientists, stakeholders and decision makers is often challenging yet very fruitful in terms of outreach and utility of the science done. When communicating with decision makers, adequate visualisation is key and scientists should take the decision makers‘ incentives and political motives into account when giving advice.

Research gaps identified

1. Too often, there is a lack of integration of climate change adaptation and mitigation science with research on other aspects of sustainable development
2. Social research on cooperation in an upstream-downstream communal irrigation system revealed strong disagreement between reality and theory. Farmers cooperated much more than predicted by theory
3. Quantifying the role of risk transfer for the most vulnerable as an adaptation option to stakeholders requires new tools

Next steps

Bridging research and the needs for decision makers in developing countries is challenging. Applied research shall not be enough and the science community should strive to engage in a bottom up need based approach in order to address specific needs of stakeholders.
MCII, therefore shall stay active in this role and will develop its approaches (such as ECA) further in collaboration with stakeholders and donors. Further collaboration with Ghana (poster session) is planned and a roadmap for the country shall be developed in collaboration with GIZ.

Other

None

3-5 keywords that characterize the session

adaptation, cost-benefit analysis, climate resilience, sustainability, embedded researcher