

# Locally Led Transformative Action to Address Loss & Damage: ICCCAD'S Nexus Approach

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## Nexus Approach

Countries and communities are increasingly exposed to adverse impacts of climate change, leading to loss and damage. With the infamous delays in climate action in the global level, it is imperative to build a bottom-up, locally led action plan so that funds can be channeled towards practical L&D measures fast and provide a basis for leveraging other sources of financing. This nexus between LLA approaches to minimize on the ground L&D are essential in this era of global boiling.

## Introduction

Globally, people are disproportionately affected by climate change consistently and are enforced to adapt, with or without external assistance. Nonetheless, the current mitigation and adaptation efforts have been deemed insufficient to resist losses and damages (L&D), particularly in vulnerable countries from the Global South. Amongst this countries, mainly women, people with disability, and other marginalized communities with less adaptive capacity, are suffering from unavoidable losses and damages caused by climate change (Boyd et al., 2021; Ojha & Dahal, 2022). It is also reported that vulnerable countries have gone beyond their ability to adapt due to frequent and intensified extreme weather events and poor institutional and financing capacity to manage the irreversible risks. In some countries and localities, it is already too late to solve the problem with conventional adaptation interventions (Kumari, 2022).

For decades, vulnerable countries which largely include LDCs (Least Developed Countries) and SIDS (Small Island Developing States) have been calling on developed countries to accept the historical responsibility for increased GHG emissions leading to rising global temperature and losses and damages; even before the establishment of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1992. After decades of negotiations, a landmark agreement was reached in the 2022 UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP27) to establish a new funding arrangements for responding to loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change<sup>1</sup>. The objective of this fund is to ensure that rich countries contribute to the fund being channeled to poorer countries to address losses and damages. The disbursement of fund will adhere to the principle of climate-just action and take a reparative approach by giving direct compensation, building local communities and institutions' capacity, and using locally led actions to address losses and damages and enable sustainability.

<sup>1</sup> <https://unfccc.int/news/cop27-reaches-breakthrough-agreement-on-new-loss-and-damage-fund-for-vulnerable-countries>

## Loss and Damage in the context of climate change

Despite the absence of a formal definition, the idea of losses and damages is the actual/potential manifestation of impacts associated with climate change that adversely affect human and natural systems<sup>2</sup>. Such impacts manifest beyond mitigation and adaptation actions when the limits have been breached. Losses and damages vary based on the context in which they occur, and the type of climate hazards experienced. These include losses and damages emerging from sudden extreme weather events, such as tropical storms and floods, to slow-onset processes such as sea-level rise, drought, and desertification. Some climatic hazards, such as seasonal hurricanes and cyclones, prevailed long before anthropogenic climate change stepped in; however, the intensity and the frequency of these hazards are what leave people unprepared for the inflicted losses and damages.

Again, losses and damages are generally categorized as economic that can be valued and quantified, for instance, loss of resources and assets; and as non-economic like loss of life or biodiversity. Similarly, the impacts can be immediate like loss of infrastructure or can be longer-term secondary such as loss of cultural heritage or mental health impacts. The scale and gravity of these impacts depend on various interlinked contextual factors, including exposure to climate hazards, the level of economic development, resilience of infrastructure, social and economic inequalities, the presence of essential services, state governance arrangements, and so on.



<sup>2</sup> <https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2012/sbi/eng/inf14.pdf>

## Locally Led Adaptation (LLA): A Key to Transformative Adaptation

The concept of the Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) approach lies in the value and priority given to climate vulnerable communities in having agencies over adaptation actions. The essential knowledge and ideas that come from the local communities prove to be the most effective due to their lived experiences and understanding of their environment and social implications. By actively engaging the local communities, complementing their work can make the uptake of adaptation interventions to be quicker, innovative and agile in tackling climate challenges. The eight principles of LLA which was developed by a consortium of like-minded researchers, academicians, and practitioners to pave the way towards transformative adaptation. The principle highlights the importance of local leadership, bottom-up decision making, local innovation, inclusion, patient and predictable financing, transparency and accountability, networking, and multistakeholder engagement.

Climate justice is a key principle that calls for reparations from developed countries who have disproportionately benefitted from historical emissions, causing global warming manifesting through losses and damages, which are being borne by the ones who have contributed the least to climate change. , Despite facing financial, technical, infrastructural, and resource constraints, the local communities have been adapting to the extreme climatic events In many cases, their anticipatory decisions have reduced the propensity of both economic, and non-economic losses and damages.

In order to ensure that the money is put to effective solutions, it is important to put the local people at the center of all interventions and decision-making process. Numerous locally tailored adaptation efforts have been proved to effective and sustainable worldwide, which are not only addressing the immediate losses and damages but also improves resilience in the long run.

So far, climate adaptation work has not drawn as much finance and attention as emission reduction projects. However, this needs to change. It is important to pool locally led solutions into global coalitions to influence bi-lateral and multilateral investments, strategies and local government policies worldwide, and share lessons and innovations. It is also imperative to strengthen the nexus between actions to scale up locally led adaptation to address loss and damage. Mitigation efforts will prevent further impacts in the long run, but it will not be sufficient in an era of climate induced losses and damages. Hence, it is important to minimize and address losses and damages through enhanced monetary support and locally led initiatives.

### **Women in Action: Addressing Salinity Crisis in South-Western Bangladesh**

Slow-onset hazards like salinity intrusion have depleted potable water in Satkhira, Bangladesh. The Golap Mohila Dal (Rose Women Group) in the village, led by women, have consulted with their communities and built their own capacities from WaterAid's Water Entrepreneurship for Women's Empowerment (WE-WE) approach, in order to run a reverse osmosis plant. This demonstrates how structural gender inequalities can be overcome through a participatory process of identifying vulnerabilities and potential solutions (GCA, 2022).

### **Community-led Initiatives in the Coast of Maldives**

Small island communities are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with rising sea levels, intense storms, and coastal erosion threatening their way of life and livelihoods. Kunburudhoo Island in South Ari Atoll in the Maldives is one such community. Despite the challenges posed by climate change and land constraints, the community of Kunburudhoo Island has made efforts to address these losses and damages. One of the most prominent initiatives has been the planting of trees and coastal vegetation to combat beach erosion and protect against the impacts of salinization, led by communities.

## Local Actions for Global Climate Resilience: The Story of ICCAD

As a leading research organization from the Global South, International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) has been conducting and advocating for contextualizing LLA and L&D approaches for years now. In order to address current impacts and minimize future losses and damages, ICCAD is working across the following initiatives:

- **Building the Future with Existing Small Grants Funds**

Receiving funding through small grants offer an effective way to channel big money from large donors and funds to local groups and organizations that are at the front seat to drive effective climate solutions. The current systems of financing are not designed to identify and invest directly to small, grassroots groups and organizations due to the due diligence requirements. Hence small grants funds can form the link between large donors and these grassroots organizations, who can use their expertise and respond promptly and effectively to crises. ICCAD has earlier given Catalytic Grants to groups working directly with beneficiaries in the frontlines, to implement innovative locally led actions, based on their needs.

- **Divisional and National Platform on Locally Led Adaptation (LLA)**

ICCCAD launched a National Platform on LLA in May 2022, to unfold the eight principles of LLA in the context of Bangladesh. The platform is aimed to foster action-based research, advocacy and capacity building with like-minded stakeholders from several sectors. In order to effectively engage local with global, a Divisional Platform was also launched in Khulna. Through key actors who are engaged with climate adaptation and resilience initiatives, this Divisional Platform can serve a space to document and share experiences, including both success stories and challenges of operationalizing LLA.

- **Loss & Damage Forum: Connecting Local to Global**

A knowledge repository and collaborative platform where resources and tools are shared among a group of practitioners, researchers and decision makers across the world, focusing on L&D is another way forward to connect local to global. It enables people to come together in one place and discuss various things that can be organized into topics and categories, share knowledge resources, organize events, etc. LDF is centered around discussion with a searchable archive of loss and damage resources. Through an integrated instant discussion board, local partners, vulnerable country governments can be supported to enhance their capacity and knowledge and they can inform the global actors simultaneously.

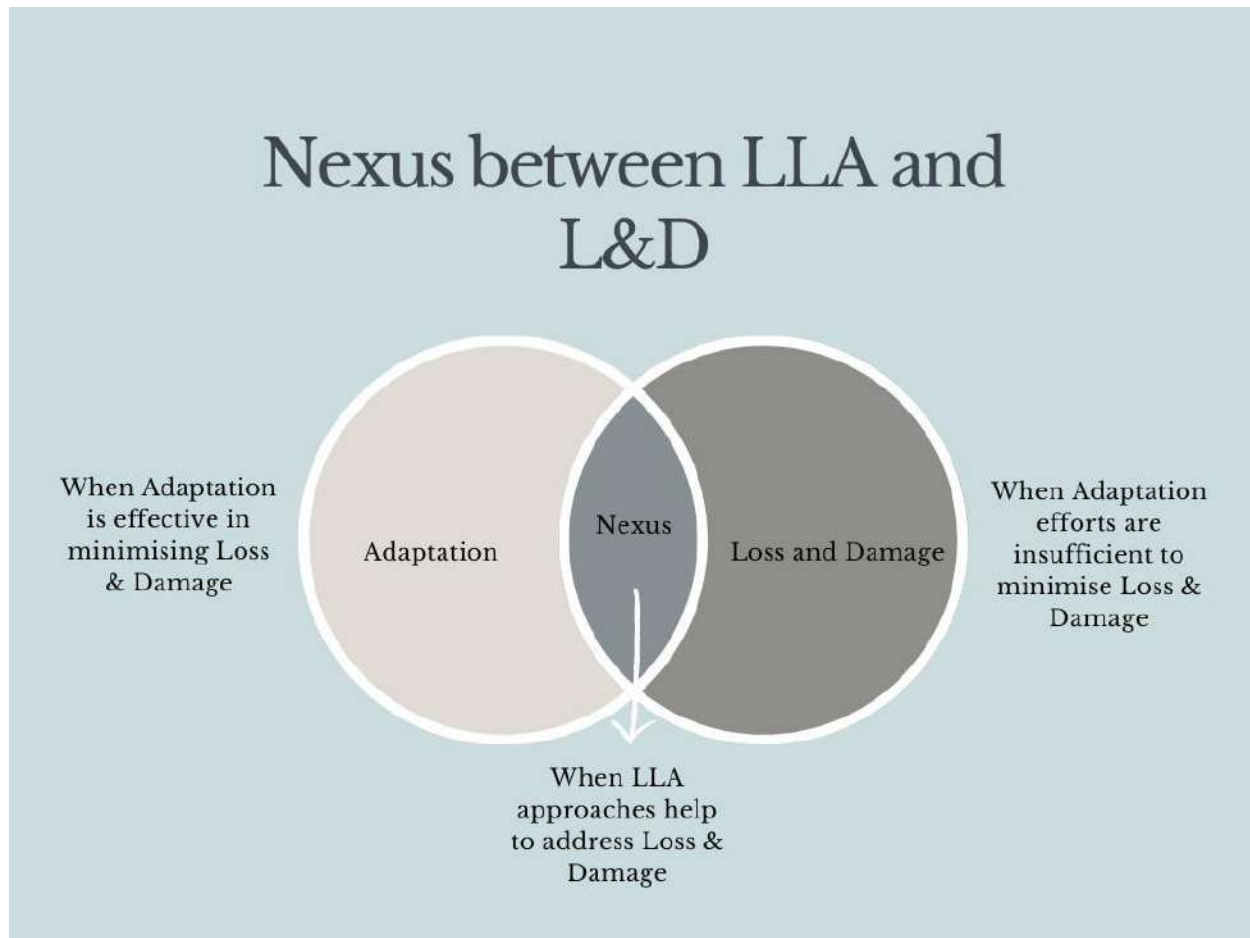
- **Alliance for Locally Led Approaches for Transformative Action on Loss and Damage (ALLACT)**

The ALL-ACT initiative is a live example of how engaging in active partnership can help in tapping fund from the global level and using local partners to utilize the fund to mobilize locally led initiatives. This will directly support countries and communities experiencing loss and damage by helping them optimize existing finance, expertise, and delivery mechanism through creation of a national facility, and make them ready to deploy the additional funds when available. Its main objective is to create a wider understanding on the concepts of LLA and L&D, establish national loss and damage facilities to harmonies governance of a range of funds, promote local action to address L&D.

- **Short Course on Nexus between LLA and L&D**

Through a 4-day workshop on the nexus between LLA and L&D, ICCAD has convened the first international in person workshop, hosting participants from different countries across South Asia. Through various interactive sessions, the short course disseminated ideas to practically incorporate LLA principles and ensure decolonization of climate action. This will aid the local communities to identify their own needs and have agency over

adaptation efforts. Short course as such is a key capacity building tool for practitioners from different spheres and capacity to implement and synergize the concept of LLA and L&D effectively in their own workspace.



### Challenges in Implementing LLA Effectively for addressing loss and damage

The main barrier in ensuring effective locally led actions requires shifting the power balance and changing the status quo. In order to ensure success, funders must adhere to and align with the LLA principles to ensure that local partners have the required decision-making authority and autonomy in the design and delivery of the intervention and have access to direct and transparent funding. Along with international funding making sure that patient, predictable, flexible and accessible funding reaches the impacted communities; national governments can also integrate LLA into existing policies and institutions. It is crucial to capacitate the local government bodies on the existing national policies about climate change to enhance local leadership and promote ownership, governance and accountability. While LLA is not the only solution to address this injustice, it is one of the effective tools to redistribute power, resources, and promote local leadership to reduce interdependency of local communities inevitably dealing with increasing crises.

### Recommendations and Way Forward

Given many of the lessons we have learned in supporting poor communities to adapt to climate change and achieve climate justice in the past, we feel it is also important to consider *how* such resources, alongside existing contributions, should best be invested. Based on our practical experience and several evaluations of large-scale initiatives, we identify four key lessons to consider in the use of *Loss and Damage* finance:

#### Prevention is Better than Cure

Drawing an example from Bangladesh, In May 2021, Cyclone Amphan, declared as a category 5 super cyclone, hit the states of West Bengal and Odisha in India. Cyclones of such magnitude in the past have killed tens of thousands of people. Due to the improved early warning and disaster response systems in India and Bangladesh, the loss of life this time has been limited. In Bangladesh, over 2.4 million people were evacuated and around a dozen deaths have been reported, compared to the vast death toll back during a similar category cyclone Sidr in 2007. Hence such kind of anticipatory action and efforts, vastly led by local organizations and communities, is vital to minimize the adverse impacts of the disasters.

**People Must be at the Centre of Any Response to Climate Induced impacts:** By endorsing the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation, organizations can give the necessary voice and priorities of the local communities and engage them in active decision making and implementation of the actions. The examples cited in the aforementioned boxes; we can see how actions are best implemented when local communities are in leadership roles.

**Long-term and Flexible Funding is Needed:** Prescriptive funding from donors make the use of funding limited. With the establishment of the L&D Fund, it is still not clear how the funds will be allocated to mobilize response. Hence, it is preferable to make flexible, programmatic multi-year commitments, that can help local communities deliver, based on their own needs.

**Break the Barriers that Marginalize People to Ensure Climate Justice:** By engaging local communities in appropriate training and building their capacities to access finance, we can ensure better participation of marginalized population. With such efforts, they can learn how to utilize their local knowledge and access platforms to voice their experiences.

Through this kind of economy-wide collaboration, we hope to be able to globalize locally-led adaptation and climate resilient efforts, which is an essential pathway to address climate change induced losses and damages.

## Conclusion

Loss and damage is a lived reality now where people face devastating impacts of climate change and cascading crises on a daily basis, trapping people in poverty and heavily threatening their human rights. Nine years after the creation of the Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage, vulnerable communities are still only getting minimal help, mainly as post disaster humanitarian aid. Substantial progress on securing Loss and Damage finance is an urgent humanitarian priority.

The expected outcome of the Glasgow Dialogue is to set-out the architecture and process through which to secure a COP decision to set up a Loss & Damage Facility by COP27 and its full operationalization by COP28. This Policy Brief intends to aid climate negotiators to break the stalemate on loss and damage and provide much-needed support to the people on the front lines of climate change.

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