P11- Climate change : making global policies local

'Doing' climate change projects in Nepal: aid regimes[1], project design and implementation practices at the district level

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Abstract:

This paper examines how the climate change projects are designed and implemented in Nepal and the extent to which the projects engage with local context and organizations. Paper draws from a comparative analysis of three different climate change projects in adaptation and disaster risk reduction in three districts in Nepal (Dolakha, Rupandehi and Lamjung)[2]. Analysis, drawing from project documentation, interviews and field level observations, focuses on the design processes of these projects, the mechanisms of implementation including the partnerships established, the activities undertaken and the claims made about impact and relevance.

The projects differ in terms of design and implementation modalities. The projects designed by the donors and international agencies are implemented through parallel structures at the district level and use local NGOs, and government agencies in an instrumental way to deliver project activities. Whereas the project designed with national and local government give more opportunity to local parties to influence implementation processes and practices. However, irrespective of the design process, the three cases clearly demonstrate that the projects' framing of climate change problem and interventions are primarily driven from donor or implementing agencies (influenced by their historical mandate). The development of local adaptation or disaster risk management plans, which forms a key interventions, are primarily driven from the technocratic process and externally driven template and standards with limited account of local climate related risks and institutional capacity. Moreover, the community organizations are mobilized in more instrumental ways in this planning process to fulfill the project achievements. This leaves a space for doubt that if the externally driven technocratic and bureaucratic process of planning fulfills the purpose of adaptation or disaster risk reduction needs at local level.

[1] We draw the concept if regime from Krasner (Krasner, 1983, pp1-3) who defined '[r]egimes as a set of rules, institutions and structured interests that constrain individuals through compliance procedures '.

[2] This paper draws from an ongoing research project called Climate Change and Rural Institution funded by DANIDA through the Danish Institute of International Studies. The project is working in three district of Nepal (Dolakha, Lamjung and Rupandehi).

It is concluded that climate change projects responding to the frameworks and interests of donor and international agencies and driven from technocratic and bureaucratic process provide limited space for reflection of national and local interests and provide limited opportunity address the local issue of climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction.

Key words: Climate risk, adaptation, disaster risk reduction, donor funded projects, Nepal

1. Introduction

Nepal, ranked as one of the most 'vulnerable countries' to the climate change risks (Word Bank 2009), has embraced the climate agenda not only by developing policies and plans but also through implementing donor funded projects on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. The National Adaptation Plan of Action (NAPA) (2010), Climate Change Policy (2011) and Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA) framework (2012) are key policy documents endorsed by Government of Nepal during last five years. But these policies suffer from a technocratic framing of problem drawing from bio-physical science, driven by external actors (donors and international agencies) and do not adequately represent the voice of the people who are the most affected from the climate change impacts (Ojha et al. 2015). Thus the vulnerability ranking exercise conducted during NAPA preparation labeled some of the mountain districts as the 'most vulnerable districts from climate change' drawing from the science behind Himalayan glacier melting and an assumed risk of Glacier Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF). However informants from villages in Dolakha and Lamjung districts reported that flashflood and landslides are the most significant climate related risks they face. This suggests that externally driven climate change policies in Nepal have limited grounding in the local context and do not appear to pay adequate attention to the socio-economic determinants of people's vulnerability to climate change related risks (Ribot 2014, O'Brien et al. 2007).

A recent study about climate change financing in Nepal reported that about 540 million has been received in by Nepal during 2009-2012 from international public finance sources (Oxfam 2014). The major portion of the donor funding is administered by international agencies (mainly the INGOs and UN agencies). This aid money has become a significant new resource of funding not only for UN agencies and INGOs but also for local NGOs. It has indeed generated a new opportunities for these agencies as their old activities in conservation and development are repackaged into new climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction relevance and new and old organizational networks reconfigured to respond to the new funding opportunities.

All three climate change related donor funded projects considered in this paper have a primary focus on community level response to climate change through development of local level plans (i.e. adaptation plans and disaster risk management plans). Those plans are prepared using either existing community organizations (i.e. local forest user

groups) or forming new community organizations (i.e. local disaster risk management committees). For example the Muli-stakeholder Forestry Program (MSFP) (in Rupandehi) and Hario Ban Project (in Lamjung) have developed community adaptation plans using local forestry groups and ECARDS[3] in Dolakha (as part of UNDP's disaster risk management program) developed local disaster risk management plans forming new organizations. Review of those plans shows that there is surprising uniformity and almost formulaic nature of these planning documents which shows that the plans are driven from externally driven standards (templates) rather than local issues.

The donors that funded those projects and the organizations that are implementing activities on the ground have prior working experiences in the field of conservation and development. For example, all three donors that funded MSFP had separate forestry projects in Nepal. Similarly, USAID which funds Hario Ban program had also funded different conservation and development projects in the past and interestingly, those projects were also implemented through the same international organizations that are playing key role in the current Hario Ban project. On the other hand, the activities of United Nations Development Program (UNDP)'s disaster risk management program in Dolakha were outsourced to ECARDS, a district NGO working in the field of natural resource management and development.

These empirical observations about the climate change related projects from three districts of Nepal question whether and to what extent the local climate change related plans and project interventions are informed by the local context of climate change or disaster risks. In other words, to what extent are project interventions and implementation modalities driven interest and mandate of the donor or implementing agencies. Further to what extent do projects engage with and strengthen the local organizations (particularly at the district level) that are expected to take a lead role in coordinating development planning and delivery at local level? By focusing on these empirical questions, this paper seeks to answer the broader question how the climate change projects are implemented in Nepal and whether and to what extent those projects engage with local context and parties. In doing this, this paper drawing from the comparative analysis of three projects implemented in three districts. All three projects are funded by international donors but are administered either by an INGO or in a direct bilateral relation with a donor. Each project has a national or district NGO partner and provide contrasting cases in terms of focus, design process and implementation modality.

The paper starts with discussion about study methods followed by a summary description of the three projects to provide contextual background for the analysis. We present the empirical material in three sections. Section four presents an analysis on

[3] ECARDS, a district based NGO established in 1996, is one of the few established NGOs in Dolakha. It has worked in the field of rural development, natural resources management and disaster risk management since its establishment.

how the projects framed climate change issues and justify their interventions and the extent which such framings are influenced by the experiences and legacy of the donor and implementing agencies. Section five teases out the process of project design. Section six focuses on project implementation on the ground with particular attention given to the analysis of local plans and institutional mechanisms. Then the paper turns to discuss the implications of the empirical findings drawing on literature on aid interventions and governance of climate change related projects.

2. Methods

This paper is part of a research on climate on institutional dimensions of climate change in three districts of Nepal namely Dolakha, Rupandehi and Lamjung. These three districts provide a contrasting context in terms of variation in geography (from high mountain to southern plain), socio-economic conditions and resource management practices. The districts also vary in terms of climate risks. With regard to the ecological variation, Dolakha falls in higher mountain region and Lamjung is covered with Lower Mountain (commonly known as mid-hills). On the other hand, Rupandehi lies in the Terai, a flat plain. Being located in mountainous region, major source of livelihood of people from Dolakha and Lamjung districts is subsistence farming with a gradual move towards commercial vegetable cultivation in better connected locations. The majority of the youth from both districts are working abroad as foreign labor affecting the availability of farm labor. Consequently, farm productivity is declining and a remittance provides a major source of household income. On the other hand, Rupandehi has highly productive agriculture land with majority of population living with agriculture. Market oriented agriculture is expanding. .

The mountain landscape is composed a mosaic of farm and forest lands and the forests constitute an integral part of mountain subsistence farming. The main portion of forest area in both Dolakha and Lamjung districts are managed under community forestry which has contributed to improve forest conditions in recent years (Thoms 2008). In Rupandehi, the forests are located only in the foothills of Churia, north of the district and there are hardly any forest patches left in the south. The forest in the north are managed under communities under community forest (as in case of hills) or jointly managed by forest department and community under regime called Collaborative Forest Management (Sinha 2011). People in the south have limited access to the forests located in the north and hence have to rely on cow dung and agricultural residues for household energy. In recent years, the settlements in the south have started to plant trees in small patches of public land forming public land management groups (PLMG).

As the districts differ in terms of geography, there are different climate related risks. People in Dokha and Lamjung have been facing risks of flashflood and landslides. In recent years the risk of Glacier Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) has also been drawn

attention to by Kathmandu based experts. Both districts are put in the rank of 'highly vulnerable districts from climate change' by NAPA based on GLOF risks (MoE 2010). On the other hand, Rupandehi has been facing problem of flood and inundation in the south and cutting river bank in the north. Drought is the common problem people in Rupandehi are facing in recent years and the NAPA sees this district as of low vulnerability to climate change.

From each district, one climate change related project (either ongoing or recently completed) was selected in consultation with district organizations (see table 1). A preliminary field visit was made during 2012-2013 to obtain an overview of the district organizations and projects related to climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. General information about ongoing and recently completed projects was obtained and discussed with district organizations to select the project for case study. The main criterion for selection was the focus of the project on climate change agenda.

Table 1: Projects and organizations/people interviewed

District	Selected projects	People/organizations interviewed at district level	Groups/households visited
Rupandehi	Multi-stakeholder Forestry Program	• RIMS staff from project office in Butwal and field office in Bhairawa • Field staff and executive committee members of, NECOS (Nepal Community Support Group), local partner of RIMS • MSFP project staff from Cluster Coordination Office in Butwal • District Forest Officer, District Soil Conservation Officer and representatives of District Development Committee (DCC) and Agriculture Development Office	• Trilotama Forest Network in Butwal which coordinates 7 CFUGs • One Community Forest User Group (CFUG)[4] (Laxmi Adarsha) and two Public Land management Groups • Five households from CFUG and PLMGs
Lamjung	Hario Ban Project	• CARE staff responsible for Lamjung • Executive committee members of Lamjung FECOFUN and field staff responsible for Hario Ban project • District Forest Officer, District Soil Conservation Officer and representative of DDC Lamjung	• Two CFUGs (Jhakrini CFUG of Gausahar VDC[5] and Devisthan of Sundarbazar) • Four households

[4] Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) are groups formed under community forestry management which are provided with rights to manage and utilize forest resources.

[5] VDC (short form of Village Development Committee) is local government unit under DDC. Each district are divided into VDCs or municipalities and both VDC and Municipalities are divided into ward which more or less correspond to a village.

Dolakha	UNDP's disaster risk management program outsourced to ECARDS	• Executive committee members of ECARDS and staff involved in disaster risk management project (CDRMP) • District Soil Conservation Officer and representatives from Dolakha Red Cross FECOFUN Dolakha and DDC Dolakha	• Village Disaster Risk Management Committee of Marbu VDC • Community Disaster Risk Management committee of Manthali village of Khari VDC

Then project documents of the selected projects were reviewed to examine project design and its implementation approach and interventions. The review covered project design documents (i.e. MSFP project document, USAID request for application for Hario Ban Project, Hario Ban Project design document submitted by implementing agency, terms of reference provided by UNDP to ECARDS) and other project publications. Senior officials from the project or donor agencies (i.e. CDRMP program officer from UNDP, climate change theme coordinators from Hario Ban and MSFP) were also interviewed.

The second visit during 2014-2015 focused on the specific project case. As shown in table 1, project staff responsible for in the district and field were interviewed focusing on the way project interventions were organized in the district (i.e. development and implementation of plans, other interventions in the district and engagement of district and local organizations). Relevant district organizations were also interviewed to explore how they were involved in implementation of the project in the district. Visits were then made to community and households involved in the project interventions (see table 1).

Besides these field visits and interviews, we also reviewed content of the adaptation or disaster risk management plans developed under the projects' support. These included two local disaster risk management plans prepared in ECARDS in Dolakha, one LAPA and two CAPs from Lamjung and one LAPA and three CAPs from Rupandehi.

3. Brief description of projects

All three projects selected were funded by international donors but were administered either by an INGO or in a direct bilateral relation with a donor. Each project has a national or district NGO partner and provide contrasts in terms of approaching climate change issues, project design and engagement of government and interventions. Two projects (MSFP and Hario Ban) were forestry projects with climate change adaptation as major focus. The CDRMP had primarily a disaster risk management focus. The table 2 provides an overview of three projects.

Table 2: Brief overview of three climate change related projects

Project name	Donor/s	Budget	Geographical cover	Implementing agency/s	Stated project goal/objective	Climate change related objective
Multi-stakeholder Forestry Program	Department for International Development (DFID), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Government of Finland	150 million for 10 years	61 districts (36 focused activities)	Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation and national and local NGOs	Improving livelihoods and resilience of poor and disadvantaged people in Nepal	Targeted support to poor, disadvantaged and climate vulnerable households and development and implementation of climate adaptation plans in local forest user groups
Hario Ban Program	United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	30 million for 5 years	15 districts covering two landscape (Tarai Arc Landscape and Chitwan Annapaurna Landscape)	WWF led consortium including CARE Nepal, NTNC and FECOFUN	Reducing the adverse impacts of climate change and threats to biodiversity in Nepal.	To increase the ability of target human and ecological communities to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change [resilience of both ecosystem and community]
Disaster risk management activities implemented by ECARDS in Dolakha	UNDP (program is funded by multiple donors)	$ 75000 for 14 months	Sure-Khare catchment and some settlements of Tsho Rolpa catchment (northern Dolakha)	CDRMP works with government organizations, NGOs and local communities	Making disaster risk resilient communities by supporting communities to cope disaster risks	Activities implemented by ECARDS have specific focus on community based climate risk management which focuses on disaster risk assessment, preparation of disaster risk management plans and minimizing disaster risks (i.e. preparedness, immediate response etc)

Sources: (MFSC et al. 2011, USAID 2010, UNDP 2011, ECARDS and UNDP 2013)

The Multi Stakeholder Forestry Programme (MSFP)

The MSFP, established in 2012 is a major forestry program in Nepal funded by three donors (see table 2) all of whom had previously and separately funded forestry projects in Nepal. The program was designed under the leadership of MOFSC with engagement

of different forest sector stakeholders (including key civil society organizations like FECOFUN and NGO Federation of Nepal). The program aims to support the improvement of livelihoods of 'poor and disadvantaged' people through an enhanced income or access to resources from forest management (MFSC et al, 2011: 7). The program has four major objectives (called outcomes in MSFP program document) which are: a) forest sector policies and plans (12% of budget) ; b) private sector promotion for increased investment and job in forest sector (15% of budget); c) livelihood benefits from forest management (48% of budget) and d) forest related ecosystem services enhancement and monitoring (23%). The activities within the component three are particularly related to climate change adaptation i.e. to provide targeted support to the 'poor, disadvantaged and climate vulnerable households'. Similarly, the program has also focused on development and implementation of climate adaptation plans.

In terms of project governance, the first phase is administered through a three tiered structure comprised as follows: First there is the Multi Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC) led by MFSC which is mandated to provide strategic direction to the programme, and with representative from government line ministries, civil society organizations (i.e. Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal-FECOFUN, NGO Federation and Nepal's Foresters' Association) and the three donors. Servicing this committee and second is a Programme Coordinator Office (PCO) which acts as the secretariat to the MSSC and has responsibility to coordinate with the GoN line agencies, the Service Support Unit (SSU) and deliver the outputs funded through GoN. Third there is the Services Support Unit (SSU) which has been established and managed by the Swiss (SDC) which will manage the programme during the initial phase and contract the implementing partners (NGOs). In the second phase, the document envisaged a separate entity to administer the program comprising different stakeholders (MFSC et al. 2011).

Program channels fund through both government budget (on-budget) (XXX %) and outsourcing to non-government service providers (i.e. NGOs, companies or consultants). Activities planned under the budgetary support are implemented through department of forest (District Forest Offices at local level). The activities implemented through to non-government service providers are organized into six geographical clusters (one cluster comprises 3-5 districts). In each cluster, activities are outsourced to a one or consortium of national and/or district organizations. Rupandehi, our research site, is included in the central Terai cluster comprising Nawalparasi, Rupandehi and Kapilvastu districts. In this cluster the activities are implemented through a consortium led by Resource Identification and Management Society (RIMS Nepal), a national NGO. The RIMS has sub-contracted activities in Rupandehi to a district based NGO called NECOS (Nepal Community Support Group).

Hario Ban Programme

Hario Ban is a USAID funded project established in 2011. The five year project was designed under USAID's 'Global Climate Change Initiative in Nepal' with the aim of developing resilience of ecosystems and people (USAID 2010). The project has three objectives as following.

a) To reduce threats to biodiversity in target landscape(s);
b) To build the structures, capacity and operations necessary for an effective sustainable landscapes management, especially reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) readiness; and
c) To increase the ability of target human and ecological communities to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Each of the objective formed a specific program component i.e. biodiversity conservation, sustainable landscape management (REDD+ readiness) and adaptation to climate change with the budget proportion of 25%, 30% and 40% respectively.

The project is being implemented in two 'landscapes' which were identified by USAID as the 'critical biodiverse areas'. One is the Terai Arc Landscape encompasses nine districts of central and western Terai, which forms a 'wild life corridor' in project's term linking four major parks in Terai (Parsa Wildlife Reserve, Chitwan National Park, Bardia National Park and Suklaphanta Wildlife Reserve). Another area is called 'Chitwan-Annapurna Landscape' which is expected to form a wildlife corridor linking Chitwan Nationa Park Annapurna Conservation. This landscape includes six districts from Terai and Hills.

The project is contracted out to a consortium led by WWF including CARE Nepal (INGO working in Nepal) and two national non-government organizations namely National Trust for Nature Conservation (a NGO established through a separate Act) and Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal-FECOFUN (federation of over 15000 community forest user groups of Nepal. As a lead agency, WWF Nepal provides an overall leadership in terms of administrative coordination and thematic leadership on biodiversity and landscape management components. The CARE Nepal is responsible for leading the climate change adaptation theme. The two national organizations are in a supportive role to implement the project activities. In Lamjung district, project activities are implemented by CARE Nepal and FECOFUN. NTNC implements project activities in the Northern part of Lamjung which is included in the Annapurna Conservation Area[6].

Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Program of UNDP

The Comprehensive Disaster Risk Management Program (CDRMP) is a five year (2011-2015) program developed and managed by UNDP Nepal. The program developed under the broader strategic partnership framework between Bureau for Crisis

[6] 28 % of district area towards the north is managed under Annapurna Conservation Area

Prevention and Recovery (BCPR)[7] and UNDP. The program has a specific focus on supporting policy and institutional capacity of Nepal on disaster risk reduction.

In Dolakha, UNDP outsourced a specific sets of activities related to climate risk management to ECARDS, a district based NGO. A 14 months (January 2012-March 2013) sub-project granted to ECARDS was entitled 'Community Based Climate Risk Management Initiative in Dolakha'. The objectives of the contract were to: conduct a disaster risk assessment in the project site (Sure-Khare catchment), develop a disaster response plan, raise awareness among local community for disaster preparedness, establish disaster management committees and provide support for small infrastructure for disaster risk mitigation. The project was implemented in Sure-Khare catchment of Dolakha district (covering part of VDCs namely Khare, Marbu, Chankhu, Suri and Jhanku and some other settlements along the catchment of Tshorolpa Lake (settlements along the Rolwaling and Tamakoshi River)[8].

4. Framing of climate change problem and project interventions

There are commonalities and differences among three projects in terms of how the climate change related problems are framed and interventions are argued for. The MSFP and Hario Ban projects are somehow similar in this regard as they were designed as a forestry project including climate change adaptation as a significant component. Hence, both projects looked at climate change problems through a forestry lense and focus on climate change adaptation (unlike the ECARDS' project which focuses on disaster risk reduction). Both projects aim to enhance 'resilience' of forests (or ecosystems) and people against climate change impacts.

From a reading of project documents, it is clear that the underlying assumption of both projects is that improved forest management or ecosystem conservation make better provisioning of forest resources and provide diverse livelihood opportunities to 'poor and marginalized people' and hence help reducing their 'vulnerability to climate change impact'. For example, the MSFP in a briefing note states that improved forest conditions ensures 'climate resilience, enhance carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction (MSCFP 2013:1). It further argues that the forest sector response to climate change should direct to address 'issues related to climate change impacts such as forest fires, pests and disease incidence, resilience of forest ecosystem and dependent communities to withstand unpredictable climate shocks and climate change related disasters'. This is also the dominant view that forest sector professionals hold.

[7] BCPR provides expertise on crisis issues to UNDP country offices, regional bureaus, and headquarters. Work of the Bureau bridges the humanitarian phase of a post-crisis response and the long-term development phase following recovery.

[8] Those settlements include Jagat, Gongar, Chhotchhot, Lamabagar, Rigu, Simigaun, Beding and Nagaun

For example a forest officer from Rupandehi district asserted that 'good forest management in itself good for climate change (both for mitigation and adaptation)'. The line of argument of the forest officials which is in line with the MSFP assumption helps to explain the understanding that the project has about how forest management contributes on climate change adaptation.

Similarly, the Hario Ban project document highlights three key problems to justify its interventions. The document asserts that climate change is posing additional threats to the degradation of ecosystem and biodiversity in one hand and vulnerability of people due to 'sustained and widespread poverty' (USAID 2010). So the project interventions aim to address those problems.

Looking the climate change from forestry lense, the project interventions are primarily focused on; first, conservation or management of the forest and ecosystem and second, supporting poor and marginalized people to improve their income or employment. For example, the MSFP sets its key result as contributing to 'lifting 1.7 million poor people out of income poverty' and 'reducing climate vulnerability of 550,000 households' and 'doubling contribution of forest based activities from 3% to 6% of household income in the program districts' (MFSC et al. 2011:10). Similarly, the Hario Ban has also allocated about 40% of its budget under the theme of climate change adaptation and the activities outlined under this theme are related to addressing poverty i.e. generating income of 'poor and marginalized people'. The project document argues that 'the economically disadvantaged (particularly the subsistence farmer) are often the most vulnerable to climate change impacts' (MFSC et al. 2011:10).

However, there are some differences between two projects the ways in which specific forest management approach are taken. The MSFP primarily focuses on contribution of Nepal's forest sector to economic growth, poverty reduction and climate change through optimizing the economic potential of the forests (MFSC et al. 2011). So, the project interventions are directed towards promotion of private sector, financial investment in forest management and creation of jobs (i.e. outcome two) through sustainable management of the forest (i.e. outcome four) (MFSC, 2011: 9). The project also has targeted support to individuals and households from 'poor and poor and disadvantaged' families through mobilization of local forest groups. It believes that the commercialization of forest management (i.e. scientific forest management and payments for ecosystem services) generates financial resources (see outcome four of project document).

On the other hand, Hario Ban focuses on conservation of biodiversity assuming that it helps to reduce 'vulnerability of people to climate change'. The project argument goes as follows: "[t]hrough effective management of ecosystems, it is possible to concurrently help to mitigate the effects of climate change, and conserve biodiversity. Opportunities to decrease the vulnerability of human and ecological system to the impacts of climate

change and further integrate climate change adaptation measures will likely be important elements' (USAID 2010:3). The project has taken a 'corridor' approach that links the existing protected areas and helps conserve biodiversity outside of the protected area system (ibid). The project document states that '[s]useful conservation often link current protected areas through wildlife corridors and protect important ecosystems and biodiversity that occur in the mosaic of land use outside of formal protected areas' (USAID 201018). This assertion seems to be based on the assumption that improved ecosystem contributes to climate change adaptation. However it is far from clear that how that benefit of the conservation trickle down to the people whom project categorized as 'people vulnerable to climate change'.

Unlike these two forestry projects, the CDRMP has an explicit focus on disaster risk management as it was designed within the disaster risk reduction framework. The CDRMP intends to support implementation of the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management (GON 2009) developed by the Government of Nepal in 2009 in accordance with the commitment made as part of Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA 2005) (UNDP 2011). The CDRMP assumes that weak institutional capacity in Nepal is the limitation to the effectively disaster risk management. So the project interventions are related to 'institutional strengthening' i.e. capacity development, fostering coordination among different organizations and support to formulate policy and legal framework (ibid). The project interventions are not only limited to national level, but also include disaster risk management at local level which is part of the sub-project outsourced to ECARDS in Dolakha.

The project implemented by ECARDs in Dolakha seems to be primarily driven from the assumed risk of Tshorolpa GLOF following 'vulnerability assessment' conducted by NAPA (MOE 2010). The UNDP had implemented a disaster preparedness project in Tshorolpa catchment area during 2009-2010 to establish an early warning system to replace the one established in 1990s which was dysfunctional. As argued by the UNDP officer, the 'project granted during 2012-2013 to ECARDS builds on the past the past project and include some additional geographical areas to incorporate additional climate related risks that people are facing at local level i.e. flash flood and landslide'[9]. As mentioned above, the ECARDS implemented activities in northern Dolakha covering Suri-Khare catchment and some settlements along the Tshorolpa catchment.

The activities undertaken by ECARDS in Dolakha include formation and mobilization of local disaster risk management committees for local level disaster risk preparedness and response. The specific activities included in the contract document are: disaster risk assessment in the selected sites, forming disaster risk management committees at VDC and village levels, conducting disaster awareness workshops and distribution of disaster related equipments (ECARDS and UNDP 2013). ECARDS also conducted trainings

[9] Interview date.

related to vegetable cultivation and other income generating activities in the project sites. However, those activities are not well argued in terms of how they constitute the disaster response (Khatri et al. 2015).

In summary, it is evident from above analysis that the two forestry projects frame climate change problems from a forestry lense where as the CDRMP project implemented through ECARDs in Dolakha focused on climate related disaster risk management. The project interventions were thus determined by the way climate change problems were framed. The specific framing of the problem or assumptions underlying the project interventions can be linked to the way the projects were designed. Arguably the design of the projects was influenced by the donor and implementing agencies drawning on their past experience of the projects. The following section examines how three projects were designed and who played an important role in determining the project interventions.

5. Project design processes and implementation structure

Though all three projects are funded by international donor agencies, they differ in terms of design process and engagement with national and district organizations. The three projects fall in different positions on the spectrum of stakeholder involvement in project design and implementation. At one end, the MSCFP was designed through a government led process involving views of different actors (i.e. donor agencies, major civil society groups and private sector). The Hario Ban falls at the other end and was designed in the donor led process with no involvement of national and district organizations. The CDRMP on the other hand was designed by UNDP along with government agency responsible to look after the disaster issue. However, the sub-contract outsourced to ECARDS was designed primarily by UNDP. The table 3 provides an overview of project design. This section presents the comparative analysis of how three projects were designed and implementation mechanisms structured with a particular focus on engagement of local actors.

Table 3: Key design features of the projects

Project	Design process	Organizations involved in project design	Implementation structure
Multi-stakeholder Forestry Program	Program designed through a multi-stakeholder process led by government. A committee was formed under leadership of joint	MFSC led design committee involved representatives of three donors, key CSOs like FECOFUN and	Governed by a' 'multi-stakeholder structure' consisting of government, donors, CSOs and private sector. A project structure called Project Support Unit established within MFSC to coordinate project governance

	secretary of MFSC. The program document endorsed by MFSC	NGO Federation of Nepal and private sector	and monitor activities. A separate project unit is administered by SDC (called SSU) which administers project finance and coordinates activities outsourced to non-government service providers.
Hario Ban Program	Program designed by USAID under air marked budget to Nepal and outsourced to service provider. The outsourcing involved request for proposal from international and national non-government organizations.	Project primarily designed by USAID and a detail project description was provided in RFP. The implementing agency developed implementation framework and worked out specific activities within the given framework.	Project is administered through a separate project management structure led by WWF. Project activities are implemented by four consortium members. A project steering committee is formed involving MFSC, USAID and implementing agencies [check]
CDRMP/Sub-contract to ECARDS	Ministry of Home Affairs and other related government organizations were involved during of the CDRMP design. But the sub-contract to ECARDS was based on response to call for proposal given by UNDP.	Program developed by UNDP and activities sub-contracted to district NGO	CDRMP is managed by UNDP through a separate program management unit. Activities are outsourced to government organizations and non-government agencies (including local community groups). ECARDS managed the sub-contract in Dolakha

Sources: (MFSC et al. 2011, UNDP 2011, USAID 2010)

As shown in the table 3, the MSCFP was designed through a government led process and its design marks a significant change in the way in which support to the Forestry sector has been offered by external donors. It was developed by three major donors (DFID, SDC and Government of Finland). As shown in table 3, the program was developed with a diverse group of actors i.e. government, donor agencies, CSOs, private sector. As asserted in the project document, the project design process constituted of consultation from national through local level to collect the views of wider group of stakeholders (MFSC et al, 2011).

On the other hand, the Hario Ban is a project solely funded by USAID and primarily designed by the donor. The project description provided during the RFP claims that the project objective and approach was framed in collaboration with MFSC, but it is far from clear how the MFSC was involved in the process. The USAID called for proposals in 2010 and provided a designed project document including project objectives, indicative

activities and even the identified geographical area (USAID 2010). The consortium led by WWF won the project bid. The technical document prepared by the WWF led consortium (WWF et al. 2011) is no more than elaboration of the project activities and project implementation framework. It is asserted in the technical document that both WWF and CARE Nepal, two key international agencies with leading role in the project, had prior working experiences of implementation of various USAID funded projects in the same localities. It appears that the project objectives, activities and approach build on the USAID past projects which were implemented in Nepal with involvement of those two INGOs. This shows that the Hario Ban program has been influenced by past activities of WWF and CARE Nepal.

On the other hand, the CDRMP was designed by UNDP. The program responds to the mandate provided to UNDP by a consortium of international agencies in Nepal for disaster response called the Nepal Risk Reduction Consortium (NRRC) [10]. The NRRC identified five key flagship areas for disaster response in Nepal[11] of which UNDP leads flagship five —'institutional and legal system for disaster risk reduction'. The CDRMP outsourced a sub-project to ECARDS Dolakha to implement local level disaster response related interventions. As shown in table 3, ECARDS was selected through a 'formal bidding process' and was assigned to implement activities under the terms of reference provided by the UNDP (even the project sites were pre-determined). The UNDP officer reported that the project sites (Sure-Khare catchment and other settlements downstream of Tshorolpa Glacier Lake) were determined in consultation with the district disaster risk management committee. ECARDS (implementing agency) and district organizations seem to have no direct role in determining the project interventions.

The projects also differ in terms of implementation structure, particularly in terms of involvement of government organizations (at both national and district levels). The MSCF is governed by a multi-stakeholder and project activities are implemented through both government structures (on-budget) and outsourced to non-government service providers (off-budget). On the other hand, the Hario Ban is completely off-budget and implemented through a dedicated project structure led by an INGO. The project activities are implemented by the consortium members (INGOs and national organizations). Each institution has district offices to deliver the activities at local level. The project does not channel fund through the government budget. The project has a steering committee at central level including MFSC.

[10] NRRC is an institutional arrangement that unites humanitarian and development partners with financial institution in partnership with the government of Nepal in order to reduce Nepal's vulnerability to natural disaster (UNDP 2011).

[11] Programmatically, the NRRC identified five priority areas called flagships, each of which is led by a Government Ministry and coordinated by an international organization.

This project structure seems also to have implications for engagement of district organizations in project implementation. In Rupandehi, DFO is directly involved in implementation of MSFP activities. A District Forest Coordination Committee (DFCC) which is chaired by the District Development Committee (DDC)[12] has been given role of monitoring of project activities in the district including that implemented through non-government service provider (i.e RIMS in case of Rupandehi). In addition to this, in Rupandehi MSFP has also assigned some field level activities to the District Forest Conservation Office (DISCO)[13]. This shows that the MSFP activities in Rupandehi involve district organizations to some extent. However, district organizations are not directly involved in implementation of Hario Ban activities Lamjung. The project has a provision of monitoring committee involving key district government organizations i.e. DFO, DISCO, DDC, journalists and some non-government organizations. But the role of such committee is limited to join field monitoring and yearly workshops. [quote here]

The CDRMP, managed by UNDP, involves government organizations to implement activities (particularly related to development of policy and a legal framework). In specific case of sub-project implemented in Dolakha, ECARDS has sole responsibility. District organizations were involved in some workshops but not directly involved in field implementation. However, CDRMP provided support to the district disaster risk management committee to develop district disaster risk management plan. Also, DISCO is providing technical support to communities to whom CDRMP provided some grant (i.e. Sorung Khola].

It is evident from above analysis that projects differ in design process, particularly in terms of involvement of national and local organizations. The project designed through government led process (i.e. MSFP) has incorporated views of diverse actors and involved diverse stakeholders in implementation too. In contrast the project designed from the donor driven process (i.e. Hario Ban) has limited involvement of national and local organizations in the implementation. Such differences in design have implications in terms whose interest or influence prevails in the project interventions. The following section presents an analysis about project interventions on the ground.

[12] District Development Committee, popularly called by its short form DDC is local government unit at district level. Nepal is administratively divided into 75 districts and each districts are sub-divided into Village Development Committees or Municipalities.

[13] The sub-contract with DISCO is related to providing technical and material support to implement small infrastructure planned in climate adaptation plans prepared in the local forest user groups.

6. Projects implementation in the ground: plans, institutions and interventions

As the MSFP and Hario Ban used similar definitions of the climate change problem and focus on adaptation, they also have used similar approach to support local level adaptation. Both projects have supported the development of local level adaptation plans (called community adaptation plans-CAP)'. As the framework developed by government for local level adaptation planning (i.e. LAPA) does not recognize the CAP, in recent years both projects have also started to develop LAPA which are based at the VDC level. The CAPs are developed using local forest user groups as the planning unit. CFUGs are the common institutional unit used for such adaptation planning except in Southern Rupandehi. In southern Rupandehi, CAPs have been developed using public land management group (PLMG). On the other hand, CDRMP in Dolakha supported the development of local disaster risk management plans by forming new committees called local disaster risk management committees at VDC and settlement level. In next few paragraphs we explain how the plans were developed, what is in the plans and how the community and local organizations are mobilized to deliver the project interventions.

Project interventions in both MSFP and Hario Ban are primarily related to strengthening local forest user groups to manage the forest resources. They found those groups useful even for climate change adaptation planning at the local level. The underlying logic behind using those forest groups for adaptation planning seems to be to benefit from the established institutional structure and availability of resources. It is mentioned in the MSFP program document that the project use the CAP developed within local forest user groups and mobilize project resources to support 'the climate vulnerable households'. A Hario Ban staff member in Lamjung reported that the "CFUGs have a well established institutional structure and they also have mechanism to target the poor people. Hario Ban wants to capitalize on those structures and mechanisms to reach the reach the most 'vulnerable households and support them to adapt with climate change impacts"[14]. He further argued that, the "CFUGs can also use their own resources (both labor contribution and financial resources) and capable to coordinate with the other VDC and district organizations to generate resource to implement CAPs"[15].

The CAPs are primarily developed following the LAPA guidelines developed and endorsed by the GON. However, the specific projects develop their own formats and templates. The Hario Ban has developed a manual for developing CAP and LAPA

[14] Interview date???
[15] Interviewed November 2014

drawing from CARE Nepal's manual of 'vulnerability assessment' and LAPA framework of government (CARE 2014). In contrast the MSFP and its partner agencies does not have a standard manual but the field staff reported that they use framework and process provided in LAPA framework (GoN 2011).

On the other hand, the disaster risk management plans in Dolakha were developed following the local disaster risk management guidelines developed my Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development. As reported by ECARDS staff in Dolakha, "the local committees were formed under the mandate provided by guidelines (MOLD 2012).

We reviewed the content of the local adaptation and disaster risk management plans. So far we have reviewed three CAP and one LAPA from Rupandehi, three CAP and one LAPA from Lamjung and two disaster risk management plans from Dolakha. Our review was focused on analyzing the extent to which the plans take account of local risks.

Table 4: Content analysis of content of climate change adaptation/DRM plans

Name of VDC/Group	Climate risk/threats identified	Adaptation options or disaster response
LAPA developed under MSFP (Rupandehi)		
Butwal Municipality (Trilotama Forest Network, Butwan municipality (includes 7 CFUGs)	Flood, landslide, forest fire, draught and epidemics (diarrhea)	Fire fighting training, video documentary for awareness, gabion boxes, plantation of bamboo and other plants for soil conservation, road side plantation, promotion of ICS, bio-gas
CAP developed under MSFP (Rupandehi)		
Laxmi Adarsha CFUG, Butwal Municipality	Flood, river bank cutting, drought, cold wave, fire, diseases and pest	Construction of conservation ponds, protection of water sources, bio-engineering structure for flood control (i.e. embankment, dam), plantation (tree, bamboo and boom grass for soil stabilization), fire line construction, public awareness on forest fire, development of adaptation fund, distribution of mosquito nets
Bishnu Public land Management Group Betkuiya-5, Bijayagadawa Rupandehi	Drought, fire, flood, cold wave and fog	Plantation (tree and fodder) in public land, installment of water pumps (Diki pump, artisanal boring, motor pump etc), off-season vegetable cultivation, riverbank farming, fire-fighting training, distribution of mosquito nets and establishment of emergency fund

LAPA prepared under Hario Ban (Lamjung)		
LAPA of Sundarbazar VDC??		
CAP prepared under Hario Ban (Lamjung)		
Dhodsingh, Sundarbazar VDC (supported by FECOFUN)	Flash flood/landslide, riverbank cutting, invasive species, forest fire and pest diseases	Plantation of tree species, small infrastructure (bio-engineering work for erosion and gully control), removal of invasive species, fire line construction, public awareness on forest fire, bio-pesticides management and promotion of integrated farming
Jagreni, Gausahar VDC (supported by CARE Nepal)	Riverbank cutting, landslide, invasive species, drought, pest/diseases in agriculture field	Gabion boxes, bio-engineering work, clearing river bed materials, plantation in landslide prone areas, maintenance of irrigation cannel, construction of plastic pond (for small irrigation and fish), removal and burring invasive species, income generating activities for poor households, promote drought resistant crop species, integrated cropping (avoid monoculture)
Raniswara Sakhar Pakha, (supported by WWF/LIBIRD)	Landslide/flood, drought	Plantation and forest protection, gabion boxes and small structure to control river cutting, training for bio-pesticide and integrated pest management, support for vegetable (tunnel for off farm vegetables), drinking water supply (pipe), irrigation management and relief fund for disaster
DRMP prepared by ECARDS		
Khare VDC	Landslide, floods, drought, diseases in crops, fire	**Before disaster:** Community mobilization, formation of working groups and monitoring, awareness and capacity building and activities related to risk mitigation focusing on landslide **During disaster:** flow of information about disaster event, help to evacuate from disaster venue, conduct search and rescue, first-aid treatment After disaster: Taking injured to hospital, mobilization for sanitation, support or coordination for rehabilitation
MarbuVDC	Landslide, floods, drought, diseases in crops, fire	**Before disaster:** Community mobilization, formation of working groups and monitoring, awareness and capacity building and activities related to risk mitigation focusing on landslide

		During disaster: flow of information about disaster event, help to evacuate from disaster venue, conduct search and rescue, first-aid treatment After disaster: Taking injured to hospital, mobilization for sanitation, support or coordination for rehabilitation

Source: Adaptation and disaster risk management plans or respective groups or VDCs

As is evident from table 4, the adaptation or disaster plans prepared by a particular project contain identical climate related risks and similar interventions. For example, the CAP and LAPA developed under MSFP in Rupandehi follows exactly same format (identical table of content) and many of text seem copied and pasted. The plans identified similar risks which are drought, forest fires, flood and river cutting, cold waves, pests and diseases. The forest fire seem the specific problem of VDC in the north where most of the forest patches are located where as droughts, river bank cutting, cold wave etc are the common problems in the south. Similarly, CAP and LAPA developed in Lamjung under the Hario Ban project have also identical climate risks identified i.e. identified as flash floods/landslides, drought, invasive species and forest fire as the climate threat. The plans include activities like plantation of tree and grass species, construction of small structure like gabion boxes and bio-engineering, introduction of drought resistant crop varieties, construction and maintenance of the irrigation cannel as the adaptation measures. The LDRMP developed by ECARDS in Dolakha, interestingly, simply copy and pasted the risks and disaster responses in plans of all VDCs.

Such identical plans were not only because the plans were developed following some guidelines (either developed by government or customized manual prepared by project in case of Hario Ban) prepared by projects). It is appears to be because the plans were driven by the framework and assumptions of the projects. As is evident in table 4, the plans developed under MSFP include activities related to forest protection (from fire), plantation, protection of river banks etc. Similarly, the plans prepared by Hario Ban have also majority of activities related forest conservation.

Evidence presented above shows that the projects use the community institutions in an instrumental way to develop and implement the plans. The forestry groups were used as a planning unit as project found them useful as an institutional vehicle to channel project money to the target beneficiary i.e. 'most vulnerable households'. For example, the groups were assumed to use the plans to ask funding from organizations in district and VDC. In the case of CDRMP, the local groups are formed primarily for mobilization of the tools/equipments provided by UNDP and use a disaster risk management fund initiated by the project.

7. Discussion and conclusion

From analysis in the preceding sections, it is evident that it is not only Nepal's climate change related national policies suffering from technocratic framing of problem and more driven by external actors (international agencies) and using processes with limited space for voices of people who are the most exposed to climate risks (Ojha et al. 2015). But, also the donor funded climate change and disaster risk management projects suffer from similar problem i.e. technocratic framing of problem driven from mandate or interest of donor or international organizations. The local interventions particularly climate change adaptation and disaster planning are driven from the project standards and template with limited account of locally realized climate risks. The projects used the community institutions and district organizations in instrumental way to fulfill the project delivery. In this section, we elaborate this argument discussing the evidence presented in the preceding sections.

Analysis in section three revealed that out of three projects, two framed climate change problems from a forestry lense. On the other hand, the third project was designed as a disaster risk management project. The particular way of framing problem has to do with the mandate of donors (commitment to support specific sectors i.e. two forestry projects and mandate provided by national risk management consortium to UNDP in case of disaster project). The project interventions were also influenced from the interest or past legacy of the implementing agencies. For example, the MSFP primarily build on past projects implemented by three donors. Similarly, the Hario Ban builds its activities and approach (i.e. corridor approach) on its past projects implemented by two of the major implementing agencies of Hario Ban project.

The three projects differ in terms of design and implementation modalities. The project designed by the donors and international agencies (i.e. Harioban) are implemented through parallel structures at the district level and use local NGOs, and government agencies in an instrumental way to deliver project activities. In contrast the project designed with national and local government (i.e. MSFP) gives more opportunity to local parties to influence implementation processes and practices. Analysis in section six showed that the MSFP, designed through a 'multi-stakeholder process' incorporating views of diverse actors has also involved different stakeholders in the implementation. Whereas the project designed from donor driven process (i.e. Hario Ban and ECARDS in Dolakha) have not directly involved the district stakeholders in project implementation rather they mobilized them in a more instrumental way. Exclusion of the government organizations (particularly at district level) in the planning and delivery of climate change and disaster risk management related interventions undermines the significance of those organizations in providing coordinating role at local level.

Irrespective of how the projects were designed, the project interventions particularly those addressing local climate risks through local planning process (CAP and disaster risk management plans) was found to be technical and bureaucratic. Technical in the sense that the plans developed by all three projects were driven from standard format and template developed by projects or adapted from government guidelines. Such plans driven from the centralized standards have limited the opportunity of understanding local dynamics of climate risks and identifying options that could address those risks. This planning process and formulaic adaptation and disaster risk management plans are in consistent with what Murai Li (2007) (REF) 'technical rendering'. The plans contained similar sets of activities, which seem to be influenced from the interest of projects rather than the community for whom the plans were prepared. As the result, many of the plans prepared by the projects have risk ineffective implementation in the ground. They were also bureaucratic in the sense that the projects used the community groups (existing local forest user groups as in case of MSFP and Harioban or new groups formed for disaster risk management by ECARDS) in a more instrumental way to fulfill the project's target of developing local adaptation plans. The two forestry projects used the local forest groups as they had well developed institutional structures and mechanism that would ease the project intervention.

The interventions of the donor funded projects which suffer from top-down and bureaucratic process seem to have limited grounding of the local context of climate change related risks and socio-economic dynamics. Rather the projects equated the vulnerability to poverty and hence they repackaged the conventional conservation and poverty reduction activities into the climate change titles. Further, as the case of NAPA development did, the donor funded projects assumed vulnerability as the outcome of the climate change (or disaster triggered by climate change) rather than contextual vulnerability (O'Brien et al. 2007). There is reason to doubt that whether and two what extent the narrow understanding of the vulnerability and formulaic planning approach of the donor funded projects help addressing the local problem of climate change.

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