

Implementing climate change adaptation and mitigation interventions at the local government levels in Tanzania: where do we start?

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Climate change adaptation and mitigation interventions have traditionally been planned at the national and policy levels, but their implementation is done predominantly at the local government authority level. The general mandate of local governments is to work for their communities. At these levels, in both rural and urban contexts, local government technical cadres are required to be equipped with knowledge and skills to address existing problems effectively, including climate change-induced impacts. A study conducted in the urban local government authorities of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, revealed low levels of knowledge and skills related to policies, plans and strategies pertinent to climate change and vulnerability assessments. As an entry point for climate change adaptation and mitigation interventions to be included in the local authority plans and budgets, there is a need to build capacity of the technical cadres. Short courses, workshops and seminars, training workshops, on-job training, conferences and postgraduate training are recommended to ensure that capacity of the local government authorities regarding climate change aspects is improved.

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Background

There has been a widespread need for governments to ensure that existing official institutions are developed to deal with the impacts of climate change, particularly in relation to adaptation and mitigation within their

respective remits. Clear and strong institutional arrangements are critical for effective and timely response. Literature elucidates that preparation of good adaptation strategies as a response to climate change will increasingly be considered as a normal component of ‘good governance’ at the national level [1]. Furthermore, for governments to be regarded as legitimate by their citizens and the international community, institutions must be prepared to address various issues that are relevant to and suitable for ensuring the welfare of their communities. The national government is mandated to ensure that policies and legislation which are required to address climate change impacts are judiciously implemented for effective climate change adaptation (CCA) and climate change mitigation (CCM).

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania’s largest city and former capital, comprises three municipalities (Ilala, Kibaha and Temeke), with Dar es Salaam City Council as an overarching strategic local authority for the metropolis. In the Tanzanian context, climate change issues are addressed mainly at the national level while coping with its impacts such as flooding and drought is left to local communities or individuals at the local government levels [2].

However, the city level may well be the central nexus for local climate change adaptation by being the point at which community-based adaptation options may be linked to the available financial resources. Tanzania does not yet have in place a designated climate change policy [3]. However, several national programs and strategies have been devised which address climate change issues both directly and indirectly. These plans and programs are in line with international agreements such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol. According to UN-Habitat, urban authorities have a key role to play in making cities more resilient to climate changes [4]. The greatest challenge observed in the case of cities like Dar es Salaam is that most of the existing plans mention CCA and CCM in passing without adequately mainstreaming the issues or specifying mechanisms for addressing them.

Context of climate change in Tanzania

Since climate change and environmental issues are regarded as cross cutting, in Tanzania they are dealt with

under the Division of Environment (DoE) of the Vice President's Office (VPO). Although various climate change sector-related policies address climate change mostly indirectly, policies and programs for addressing current vulnerability and promoting CCA at the city level are limited. Similarly, mainstreaming of CCA concerns in development plans, strategies, programs, projects, and routine activities has yet to be done [5]. Planning and implementing CCA strategies, plans and operational measures at local levels offer a range of advantages and opportunities. It is easier and more appropriate for some adaptation interventions to be implemented at the local rather than at the national level. Furthermore, local government authorities (LGAs) have strong relationships with other local stakeholders, such as community groups, NGOs and other grass-root level organizations, which have tools and ways to communicate and mediate with the community as well as to engage civil society. It is further underscored that in Tanzania CCA strategy is mostly addressed at the national policy level and to date little strategic attention has been given by LGAs, which actually implement most adaptation and mitigation activities [3].

To be able to address climate change impacts effectively at the local level, interaction and coordination between different sectors and levels of governance are essential [6^{••}]. In Dar es Salaam, this is limited due to inadequate capacity at city and municipal levels as well as poor involvement of local vulnerable areas and groups. It is therefore justifiable to accord these aspects of adaptive capacity extra attention [2,7]. This has also been observed in the South African context [6^{••}], where mismatch in the priorities between different government spheres regarding climate change efforts is evident.

Based on the need for the government to implement its legislation, the first challenge is that policy enforcers at the local level need to be familiar with the contents of national policies and legislation relating to CCM and CCA. Furthermore, there is a need to understand the capacity gaps of the policy implementers and law enforcers. This is important as the first and most important step in creating awareness and empowering decision makers with knowledge on issues of climate change impacts, especially in the coastal areas where apart from the regular climate change impacts, there is profound challenge of salt water intrusion due to over-pumping of groundwater among other reasons. Salt water intrusion may compromise the ability of water utility authorities to supply adequate and potable water to urban dwellers.

Globally, mainstreaming of CCA has been given significant attention. In the literature several key aspects emerge as being important in the mainstreaming process [8–11]; understanding and applying information about climate change impacts and different sectoral response

options in urban and arid environments (e.g., providing water and sanitation in urban settings); application of climate information in non-traditional sectors; developing and implementing early warning systems for small-scale climate extremes such as flash floods in selected regions; as well as improving understanding of environment and climate change impacts. These aspects should be included in the capacity building of the LGAs in Dar es Salaam as they are among the major issues affecting the welfare of the urban poor, in particular. Therefore, this paper reports on research into the relevance of these issues and proposes specific measures to enable LGA staff to mainstream climate change matters in plans and strategies as well as in their day-to-day activities.

Mainstreaming climate change

In this paper, mainstreaming is defined as the process of systematically integrating a selected value/idea/theme into policy domains, particularly the urban development and environmental management sectors through capacity building to the respective technical cadre. The mainstreaming approach to CCA is anticipated to provide more sustainable, efficient, and effective use of financial and human resources [10] than action-specific approaches. Building capacity of the local government cadre may substantially contribute to ensuring that CCA is mainstreamed and integrated into the specific local government actions and plans. This can further facilitate the involvement of different levels of governance and stakeholders into decision-making.

It is worth noting that there are many difficulties in applying the mainstreaming approach and that its actual effectiveness is often questioned [11]. For instance, LGAs officers may not embrace changes that threaten their value systems and interests, including power hierarchies including leadership, institutional context and competing planning agenda [12]. Secondly, LGAs may be concerned about a reduction of funds dedicated to adaptation due to the adoption of the mainstreaming approach and use of mainstreaming tools (e.g. monitoring actions) as a means of the central government and donors to control and impose top-down conditions to LGAs [9]. This situation therefore calls for building the capacity of local government technical staff who are the key implementers of various plans for ensuring their involvement in the whole process of mainstreaming CCA and CCM issues.

At the operational level, a mainstreaming strategy involves four types of change: procedural, organizational, normative, and policy reframing [9]. In the context of this paper the specific aim of those changes is the improvement of local capacity to adapt rather than the mere climate proofing of development decision. Therefore, a contextual vulnerability perspective is assumed, which addresses the issue of human security in a multidimensional manner

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