



## **INTEGRATING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE IN CLIMATE RISK MANAGEMENT IN KENYA: POLICY PERSPECTIVES**

**Roundtable meeting on policy processes on climate change and agriculture**

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### **INTRODUCTION (1)**

- The recognition of the threat posed by climate change has led to emphasis on strategies to manage climate risk
- At the local level, the need for developing effective adaptation strategies have led to the recognition of the role of Indigenous knowledge (IK)
- IK institutionalized local knowledge built upon and passed on from one generation to the other by word of mouth
- Forms the basis for local decision-making in many rural communities
- IK has been recognized as important in helping communities to cope with the effects of changing climate



## INTRODUCTION (2)

- Contrary to prevailing belief among scientists & planners;
  - IK represents a distinctive intellectual tradition and not just myth
- Often when put to test with data acquired scientifically, IK is found quite adequate
- However, IK is not formerly recognized in the national climate risk management policies
- The IK PAR project was conceived to address;
  - the adaptation gap by exploring the avenues for merging IK and western knowledge for better management of climate risk
  - It used the case study of the Nganyi community in Western Kenya



## INTRODUCTION (3)

Highlight of PAR's successes so far;

- Brought together a diverse team of actors to work together; ICPAC, KMD, Maseno University, GLUK, KIPi, NMK, local community, local administration etc
- Has won the confidence of the Nganyi community to share information
- Demystified and documented IK among the Nganyi and compiled it into a book
- Carried out several joint seasonal forecasts which have shown good convergence between the western science and IK
- University level training of some members of the community
- Establishment & setting up of a resource center



## Research problem

- No comprehensive policy framework to integrate the two sources of climate knowledge at the local and national level
- In essence policy pathways to mainstreaming and integrating IK in climate risk management in Kenya are not clearly understood.
  - Who are the actors?
  - What are their policy discourses?
  - What are their politics and interest?
  - What policy spaces exist for integrating IK in government policies



## Objectives

- Overall objective was to identify policy opportunities through which IK can be integrated to enhance climate risk management
- Specific objectives;
  - i. Analyze the roles and interests of different actors & institutions in climate risk management
  - ii. Establish historical and contemporary discourses that have influenced climate risk management policies in Kenya
  - iii. Identify existing and potential policy spaces for integrating IK and western science in climate risk management strategies



## Methodological approaches

- Stakeholder analysis;
  - Stakeholders (actors) identification
  - Stakeholder interests and influence on policy issues.
  - Sources; Key informants, documents and interviews.
- Narrative policy analysis
  - Identifying positions in policy debate
  - Actor views and position on issues
  - Sources; policy documents, news articles, interviews with actors
- Actor analysis
  - Involved obtaining actor's perception.
  - Actor's assumptions on facts, links and goals in relation to the policy problem.
  - Sources; documents & interviews



## Actors (1)

- Key government ministries (first-tier in the hierarchy); Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources (MEMR), Ministry of Special Programs, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Science and Technology and the Office of the Prime Minister
- MEMR is currently playing a key role in coordinating climate adaptation strategies (*very key player*)
- The office of the prime minister is also playing a key role in harmonizing climate policies within the coalition government.
- PM office has a key coordination and supervising role of all government ministries and departments



## Actors (2)

- Government policies are often implemented through departments or parastatals under the ministries (2<sup>nd</sup> tier);
  - Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD), National Museums of Kenya (NMK), Kenya Industrial Property Institute, National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA), Universities etc
- KMD plays a key role in collecting, interpreting and disseminating climate information in Kenya;
  - information from the international weather information systems &
  - Thinly dispersed network of local weather stations in the country
- The predictions are made at rather macro-level (regional), with huge variability with a region



## Politics and interest of actors

- At its inception, KMD had a strong orientation towards serving the aviation industry
  - Weather stations established in all the major airports.
  - For a long KMD was hosted under the Ministry of Transport and Communication.
- The shift to the MEMR was largely driven by the current Minister
- The interest of KMD has shifted to include a more integrated approach; weather information for a wide range of uses/users
- With the threat of climate change, weather information is treated with seriousness and the KMD is expected to provide accurate, timely and use friendly information.



## Narratives and evidence (1)

- The discourse around indigenous knowledge is closely intertwined with the history of colonization which involved degradation of the local knowledge while advancing the western knowledge
- The indigenous knowledge is often mystified and passed on informally to a selected individuals in the society
- The prevailing policy narratives view IK as being too mystical, not verifiable through scientific methods and ultimately of limited use in the modern world
- On the other hand, climate science is scientifically verifiable and tractable hence its considered reliable
- The Nganyu community has developed advanced methods of weather prediction through observing nature



## Narratives and evidence (2)

- PAR project research set out to counter the prevailing narrative by demystifying the IK knowledge by documenting it and analyzing its scientific underpinnings.
- The project also attempted to verify the accuracy of predictions based on IK by comparing them with those of modern science.
- The evidence generated by the PAR project (i.e. the counter-narrative to the prevailing narrative) needs to find its way into climate debates.



## Policy spaces (1)

- The evidence of the PAR research especially the concurrence between IK predictions and those of modern climate science.
- The documentation of the Ngany'i's IK and its publication as a book provides
- RANET project under KMD; localized weather information transmission in local language
- existing heritage laws (e.g. The antiquities and Monuments Act) there exists an opportunity for preservation and protection of the Ngany'i 'rain-making' shrines as protection areas jointly by NMK & community to ensure knowledge is preserved for the posterity



## Policy spaces (2)

- The recently concluded Formulation of the National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS) in April 2010 was a policy window (now closed) but;
  - still offers opportunities for establishment and capacity enhancement of local innovation centers like the PARs resource center.
- The on-going formulation of the national policy on traditional knowledge, genetic resources and traditional cultural expression provides an open policy space for the inclusion of IK as part of traditional knowledge and cultural expression.



## Conclusions

- The policy process analysis using the three lenses has provided insights into the complexities of climate policies making processes in Kenya.
- IK has to overcome the entrenched narratives that view it as being mystical and non scientific.
- IK cannot replace modern science, but the two can be integrated for better climate risk management.
- There exist several windows of opportunities but the greatest threat is to counter the prevailing narrative that views IK as being irrelevant due to its non-tractable nature.
- The PAR project has gathered evidence that can be used to counter the prevailing narrative at various policy fora.



**THANK ALL FOR LISTENING**

