

## ENDA COMMUNITIES

The underlying logic for ENDA Communities lies in the continuing disparity of access to locally useful information, opportunities, technologies, and resources faced by decision makers at all levels, but particularly at the «coalface» of low socio-ecological resilience and vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and variability in the Global South.

The most severe impacts are likely to be felt by those countries and regions who, historically, are largely innocent victims. These impacts can be viewed through increasing desertification, rising sea levels, reduced fresh water resources, and increased pressure on ecological goods and services as communities try to maintain access to increasingly scarce environmental resources on which they depend due to barriers to secondary production and processing.

Climate change affects everyone, everywhere. The key word is change. Change is normal but today's climate change impacts have the potential to thwart economic and social development in the South, a process already constrained by historical relations of power and dependence that favour the North. Climate change does not distinguish between rich and poor and does not adopt the principal 'the polluter pays!'

Meanwhile, climate change has become an 'industry' with its own discourse, terminologies and a whole new raft of «experts» whose bread and butter is derived from writing about and delivering insistent advice at every level about mainstreaming, mitigation and adaptation. This industry, and the resources (particularly money) associated with it, largely originate in the North via supranational organisations and institutions, INGOs and increasingly, southern NGOs employed by Northern agencies to deliver tools, approaches and methodologies developed in the North.

It is not that knowledge and information coming from the North is bad. Much is vital for the survival and maintenance of lives and livelihoods of people in the South who require technological skills and resources, often only available in the North suggesting an urgent need for information and technology transfer. Historical responsibility for the problem of global warming lies in the North and this has to be taken into account both in climate negotiations and in allocating resources to build adaptive capacity in the South. Ironically, most of the medications to climate impacted vulnerability in Africa and elsewhere in the South are being articulated and administered by institutions and agencies based in the developed

countries of the North. This indicates something very basic missing from the debate – the need for southern peoples and decision-makers to focus on their particular situations in through the medium of local language and culture and through local cognitive systems.

The underlying *raison d'être* of ENDA Communities is to break through the chains of dependence in understanding climate change impacts and vulnerability and devising realistic and sensible adaptation strategies that respond to the agendas of real communities who have their own understandings and ways of interpreting climate affected lives and livelihoods.

ENDA Communities is an umbrella conceptual and ideological approach through which a variety of work themes are undertaken. At the core is the Global Communities (Climate and Development) Network (GCN), indigenous knowledge bank (IKB) and community-based adaptation (CBA) programmes. Surrounding these core work themes are gender and climate change, energy and climate change, and cities and climate change.



**Fulani unrepresented Community of Afraim Plain, Ghana**

The rest of the world is invited too, as critical observers, as contributors to networks of knowledge supply and technical advice but not as participants in the arena of communications. In this network, no formal qualifications or writing skills are required.

You do not need to be a 'mover or shaker' or a leader to participate. Membership and participation is open to communities in all developing countries from Burundi to Fiji, from Cambodia to Moldova, from Dominican Republic to Bolivia. You may be concerned with livelihoods (agriculture, crafts, small industry, tourism, trading for example). Maybe you are a local decision maker of councillor, a traditional leader or a member of local government. Alternatively, you may be a researcher who thinks and writes about climate and development but lacks a platform to wider dissemination of your work. You might be a doctor seeing increased incidence of certain types of disease or a teacher who needs to talk more to children about changing weather and its impacts or a retired public servant who perceives social and environmental change from a historical perspective.

### What the GCN does:

ENDA Communities' concerns are about people and people or community-led development in a time of increasing climate change and variability where the debate over responsibility, mitigation and adaptation often loses track of the concerns of local people for development. Thus climate is a feature of our debate, not the core, the core is people and the social and ecological system in which they live. Here are a few of the things that we aim to provide:

- Meeting place for southern CBOs, CSOs, LDMs
- Network – an organisational and institutional map – who's who?
- Talkshop – chats, ideas, brainstorming space, online, e-mail, local radio,
- Blogs, Facebook, discussion groups,
- Window on experience – past, present and planned – how people and places are changing – coping strategies, management of ecological goods and services, things that have been tried to adapt to change, what has worked and what has not,
- Online, newsletter, e-mail, local mail,
- Climate and development news and info portal – bulletins - online, e-mail, snail-mail,
- Pipeline for opportunities – funding, scholarships
- Guide on how to structure proposals/applications, what to say, what not,
- Glossary – complex issues explained in simple, non-technical language
- Resource base – local knowledge and coping systems, how people managed their environments in the past, methods, tools, advice, links, who to talk to.
- People who care, people who try to understand, who have worked and walked in the same fields, along the same paths.

### why should people get involved in ENDA Communities?

#### Here's a few ideas:

- South-South action, southern-based, southern oriented, southern concerns, southern bias, southern coordinated – Africa, Asia, SIDS, Latin America;
- Happening, dynamic, expressive, up to date – something that moves, not static and it wants to involve you;

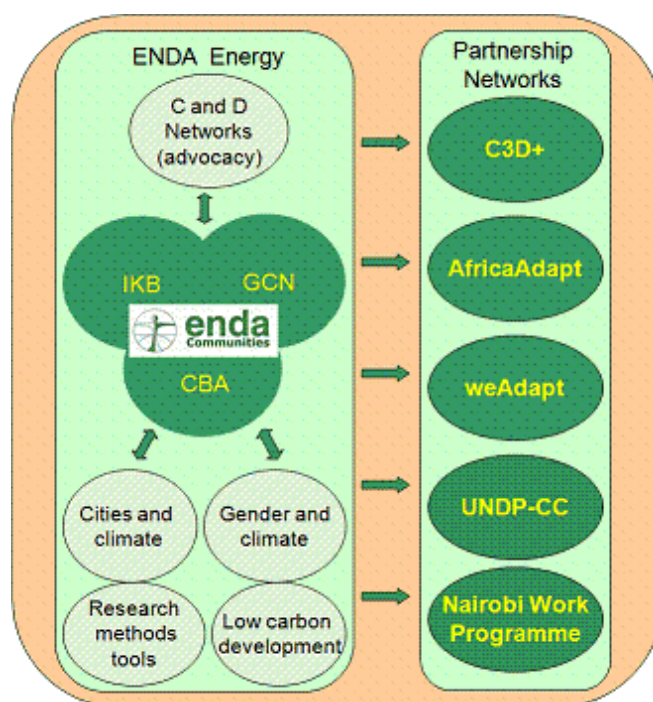
- Understandable, practical, pragmatic – complex issues deconstructed and explained in simple language (English and French);
- Non-partisan, open agenda focussed on climate and sustainable development;
- Integrated into the ENDA family of climate and development activities.

### Membership

ENDA Communities platform has started with a core membership (community orgs, local researchers and decision makers) of 32 bodies and an associate membership of around 80. Core membership will be recruited largely on an invitational basis although applications from appropriate bodies will be accepted.

### Web presence

ENDA Communities aims to use a number of communications mechanisms to allow for the fact that much of its membership have poor access to the Internet. Meanwhile, a new communications platform is under development at [www.enda-communities.org](http://www.enda-communities.org) from where there are links to each work theme and details of activities.



Organisational chart showing the ENDA Communities family and other climate and development networks