

POLICY BRIEF

NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE LEARNING STRATEGY

Why Zimbabwe need to develop and adopt a Climate Change Learning strategy

Introduction

Climate change is a reality and it needs urgent protracted response. It poses risks on human livelihoods through impacting ecosystems that support all life forms if it continues unabated. The greatest effect is felt in the developing or least developed countries due to poorly developed resources bases, poorly resourced and developed institutions and over reliance on climate dependant and very sensitive productive sectors such as agriculture, water and forestry.

Climate change is a salient global issue whose impacts are affecting countries regardless of developmental status. Despite the media coverage and numerous online debates on the issue of climate change, sharing of sound knowledge and adaptation strategies remains a major priority. Zimbabwe has not been spared by the climate change phenomenon which is manifesting itself in the form of increases in extreme weather events. The frequency of droughts, floods, heatwaves and erratic rainfall patterns has noticeably increased. Many of these weather events have led to loss of both human and animal lives. One may even say that climate change effects can be a threat to the first basic human right which is the right to life.

Zimbabwe has not changed much of its age old practices when it comes to the running of sectors such as agriculture, forestry and water resources. However, the status quo is no longer sustainable and new methods of producing have to be introduced. The rural communities of Zimbabwe mainly depend on rain fed agriculture, climate change is making productivity more difficult and food insecurity is a constant problem. The solutions to these problems are likely to be more effective if there is a contribution by those experiencing the devastating effects of climate change. It has become of utmost importance that the Zimbabwean population knows more about

climate change, the potential challenges it presents and how to adapt to it.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation reduces the impact of climate change on human livelihoods and builds resilience through beneficial opportunities. Article 2 of the Paris agreement underscores the need to increase the capacities to adapt through strengthening responses to climate change by communities. Article 6 of the UNFCCC, UNESCO (2010) and Sustainable Development Goal 13 (2015) all agree on the need for development of education and training sector programmes on climate change and its associated impacts/effects in order to have a well informed and knowledgeable world population.

To achieve a state of having a knowledgeable and educated population that is able to respond better to the effects of climate change as well as to be able to mitigate against it there is need to adopt a comprehensive strategy that has a mix of different learning methodologies. To this effect Zimbabwe is in the process of developing a National Climate Change Learning Strategy as part of the UNCC: Learn Southern Africa Initiative which started in 2009 as a collaboration of UN Agencies that support and contribute to effective, sustainable and result oriented learning to address climate change related development challenges. Zimbabwe has received support from the One UN Climate Change Learning Partnership (UN CC:Learn) which is a joint initiative of more than 30 multilateral organizations helping countries to achieve climate change action both through general climate literacy and applied skills development. UN CC:Learn provides strategic advice and quality learning resources to help people, governments and businesses to understand, adapt, and build resilience to climate change. UN CC:Learn is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Why Develop a Climate Change Learning Strategy

The National Climate Change Learning Strategy is a powerful tool that is useful to support the implementation of National Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) including other relevant national plans that address climate change as well as the achievement of the sustainable development goals. The National Climate Change Learning Strategy systematically examines and identifies the critical learning and skills development needs in key climate sensitive sectors such as agriculture, energy, finance, forestry, health, labour, mining, tourism, transport and water. The strategy also addresses challenges and limitation in the existing formal education and training system so as to increase learning opportunities and reach a wider range of stakeholders.

Based on an assessment of the learning needs and existing capacities to deliver learning, the strategy will define a number of specific actions for the short, medium and long- term that are most appropriate to national circumstances. The actions include but are not limited to the following:

- Specialized courses across sectors to prepare vulnerability assessment,
- Skills development to prepare proposals under various international funding opportunities,
- Strategic planning and institutional transformation to align with the country's NDCs and NAPs.

How does individual and institutional capacity development link?

Capacity development is an important process by which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the

abilities to set and achieve own development goals over time (UNDP 2009). Capacity development does not always require new capacities, but at times involves the redeployment of existing capacities, or application of dormant ones. Countries have different baselines upon which they can build, which indicate the different levels at which capacity development will contribute to and impact on achieving national and sub-national policy objectives and priorities. The strategy is focused on capacity development at individual and institutional levels and seeks to link (1) the capacity development to strengthen learning institutions with specific (2) specific learning activities to develop skills of individuals and vice versa.

The purpose of the National Climate Change Learning Strategy

Zimbabwe has a wide range of related capacity development activities already being implemented, the National Climate Change Learning strategy comes in as a more systematic approach that enables the country to take stock of existing initiatives, identify gaps and prioritize actions.

The specific objectives of a learning strategy include some of the following:

1. Assessing existing human resources capacities and skills in key sectors in key sectors identified in NAPs, NDCs or other relevant plans addressing climate change.
2. Prioritizing actions to enhance climate change learning and strengthen national education and training systems;
3. Ensuring that climate change learning helps to achieve national climate change objectives, for example as set out in the NDCs and NAPs;
4. Augmenting mobilization of resources for training and skills development from national budgets and external sources;
5. Supporting the creation of sustainable and gender-balanced human resources

base able to address climate change in a sustainable manner.

Principles of developing a Climate Change Learning Strategy.

The following guiding principles for the development of a Climate Change Learning Strategy are based on the UN CC:Learn experience and each country should consider and tailor these principles or others to their national context.

Integrating Climate Change Learning within National and Sectoral Planning, Including NDCs and NAPs

Climate change is a cross-sectoral issue that requires an integrated response across government. Engagement of sectoral line Ministries in the Strategy development process is therefore of key importance. It is also critical that Climate Change Learning Strategies are clearly linked to National Development Plans and other relevant policy frameworks to ensure that learning contributes to achieving national climate change priorities. As Zimbabwe already has developed its NDCs and National Adaptation Roadmap. Both provide a basis for strengthening human capacities for climate change and act as a key entry point for UN CC:Learn support.

Integrating Learning into Project and Programme Design

A strategic approach to climate change learning does not only demand creating brand new projects or exclusively training oriented activities. Instead it focuses on mainstreaming climate change learning into existing projects and programmes, this can be an effective entry point in areas with significant financial and human resources limitations.

Achieving Multi-Sectoral and Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

The process of developing a Strategy should bring together relevant actors from government, civil society, the private sector (including employers' organizations and trade unions), national education and training institutions, as well as UN agencies and other development partners. A multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder dialogue helps to gather relevant information and increases ownership. It also helps to catalyse collaboration beyond the Strategy development process and strengthen implementation.

Incorporating Gender Considerations

A gender-sensitive approach pays attention to gender differences in the effects and experiences of climate change within a country. Taking into account gender considerations, such as the representation of women and men, as well as their roles, responsibilities, knowledge and skills, in Strategy development and implementation will result in more inclusive processes, enhanced climate action and increased equality.

Responding to Labour Market Needs

The transition to a low-emission and climate-resilient economy affects skills needs in different ways. There will be decreased demand for some jobs (e.g. in the production and use of fossil fuels) and increased demand for others (e.g. in the area of public transport). Retraining for new green jobs opportunities is therefore crucial to ease the transition to a climate-resilient economy and to avoid high social and economic costs of restructuring. Strategies should consider existing and

future trends, and support effective skills development in line with changing labour markets.

Strengthening Existing Education and Training Systems

The work of a trainer is never over. In order to ensure that in the long run a country can continue to meet its climate change learning needs through domestic means, it is important to strengthen the capacity of the national education and training systems. It is therefore recommended that the National Learning Strategy includes actions to develop the capacities of national education and training institutions, and advance national curricula and related policy reform.

Fostering Results

An important dimension of a Climate Change Learning Strategy is to make sure that capacity development activities are followed by concrete results and development changes. It is therefore essential to establish at the beginning of the Strategy development process the baseline situation (what human capacities and skills exist?), define specific objectives and targets (where do we want to go?), and agree on a monitoring and

evaluation framework for the Strategy (how will we proceed?).

Ensuring Sustainability

In order to ensure sustainability, the Strategy development process is as important as its outcome. A country-driven and participatory process helps to foster ownership and to create long-term support for Strategy implementation. Sustainable Strategy implementation also requires the definition of a robust implementation framework, including clear responsibilities for coordinating and implementing different actions and resource mobilization. Aligning coordination and finance arrangements with existing national mechanisms helps to ensure that arrangements remain functional in the medium and long-term.

Starting and Strengthening

An iterative learning strategy is one which begins with available resources and support, and builds on its successes towards a more comprehensive and robust system. Considering the complexities of climate change and the myriad actors, decision-making processes, sectors and uncertainties involved, no system is all-inclusive or perfect from the start.