

The climate is changing, arguably not for the benefit of humans. Adapting to changes in our socio-ecological systems, including unfavorable weather patterns and more frequent disastrous events, is therefore inevitable.

There has been growing recognition that local communities possess adequate knowledge, experience and understanding of vulnerabilities and risks associated with their lives and livelihoods, and that this should be included in adaptation initiatives. Community-based adaptation (CBA) is an increasingly popular buzzword within academia, as well as organizations focusing on climate change. CBA refers to different types of adaptation initiatives on the level of local communities. While CBA may sound logically sound and effective, current research outlines a need for more evidence about its efficacy and limitations, as well as identification of lessons learnt.

By conducting a scoping review of scientific articles, as well as five interviews with practitioners, this thesis identified multiple factors influencing the efficacy of CBA initiatives. Factors such as local ownership, inclusive participation, enabling governance and institutional collaboration are some of the cornerstones of CBA, whilst a lack of community cohesiveness, limited funding, lack of incentives, power dynamics, and donor restrictions constitute few of the many challenges.

Overall, results emphasize the acute need for a holistic approach to climate change adaptation, characterized by enabling and collaborative governance systems, smarter distribution of resources, and equality among populations.