



Community-based Adaptation in the United States: A Critical Assessment

Adaptation Futures
May 11, 2016



Project Objective



- Funded by the Kresge Foundation
 - Supported community-based adaptation for years
- Undertake a critical assessment of community-based adaptation to better understand...
 - What **motivates** communities to take action?
 - What are communities **doing** to adapt?
 - How are communities **implementing** adaptation actions?
 - What are communities **achieving** through adaptation?
 - ***How to advance the field?***

Methods

-  **Activity Stream 1: Compile Baseline**
-  **Activity Stream 2: Develop an Analytical Framework**
-  **Activity Stream 3: Obtain External Expert Guidance**
-  **Activity Stream 4: Conduct Case Studies**
-  **Activity Stream 5: Compare Case Studies**
-  **Activity Stream 6: Share Project Findings**

Case Study Communities



Select Findings

What motivates communities to take action?



Communities are taking action

What is driving action...

- Extreme events
- Shared community values
 - Maintaining or enhancing socioeconomic conditions
 - Community revitalization and social equality
 - Identification with natural resources
- Planning for climate change
 - Climate change information raises awareness
 - Demonstrating innovation in climate change planning

Select Findings

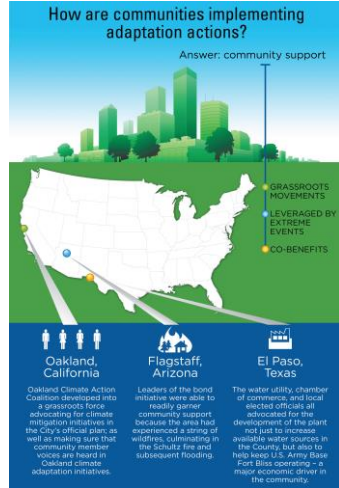
What are communities doing to adapt?



- Reducing exposure
 - Relocation or retreatment
 - Land use regulations
- Reducing sensitivity
 - Municipal policy actions or tools
 - Landscape level actions
 - Building infrastructure
- Enhancing adaptive capacity
 - Specific, mainstreaming adaptation
 - Generic, community and neighborhood resilience

Select Findings

How are communities implementing actions?



- Community engagement and stakeholder buy-in
 - Building community support
 - Capitalizing on effective leadership
- Facilitating implementation
 - Peer-to-peer networking and learning
- Employ multiple, targeted strategies to build support
 - Leverage support after extreme events
 - Focus on co-benefits
 - Appeal to community values, economic projections, and cultural values

Select Findings

What are communities achieving?



- Strategic Business Planning**
Organization-wide agenda setting and prioritization
- Department-Wide Planning**
Long-term planning for water supply or drainage and wastewater
- Capital Improvements**
Allocation of funding for implementation
- Operations and Maintenance**
Ensuring the day-to-day functioning of the water, wastewater, drainage, and solid waste system

- Reducing climate vulnerability
 - Tangible reductions in vulnerability
 - Increases in adaptive capacity
- Achieving co-benefits
 - Addressing multiple community goals
- Integrating climate considerations into decision making processes
- Monitoring and evaluation
 - Local actors evaluate anecdotally
 - Few cases of formal evaluation programs

Select Findings

Advancing the Climate Adaptation Field



- Start now, because...
 - Climate vulnerability already exists, and climate change is increasing these vulnerabilities
 - Waiting does not guarantee more or better information
 - Real vulnerability reduction takes time
- Craft outreach efforts to build community support
- Use windows of opportunity to advance adaptation
- Employ commonly used policy tools to mainstream adaptation
- Piggyback adaptation onto other salient community issues
- Use partnerships to advance adaptation

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Conclusions



- Adaptation actions are reducing vulnerability to climate variability and change
- Take action now
 - Takes leadership and creativity
 - Can get around barriers
- This is just a start
 - What is happening is clearly not enough
 - Financial and technical support is needed

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