

Understanding the Barriers to Climate Change Adaptation in Namibia

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What is this study about?

Despite an enabling national policy environment, adaptation efforts in Namibia have had limited success. The challenges being faced are not yet well understood because few empirical studies have considered barriers in the context of Namibia specifically. This study aimed to contribute to answering the ASSAR research question:

What are the barriers and enablers for effective, long-term adaptation, and what is required to enable more widespread, sustained adaptation in Namibia?



Addressing this knowledge gap is important, given that climate change is already manifesting in the form of increasingly frequent and intense droughts and floods, a greater number of annual heat wave days and shifting seasonal rainfall patterns.

What did we do?

A) Introductory meetings were held in 2014 with **8 key stakeholders**. These meetings sought to gain a basic understanding the adaptation sphere in Namibia, in terms of:

- What adaptation initiatives already existed
- What the challenges had been to date
- What were perceived to be key areas for research.

B) Key informant interviews (KII) were then conducted with **18 stakeholders** in February 2015. Interviewees were identified based on the recommendations made in the 2014 meetings, as well as by 'snowball sampling'. These interviews sought to collect information on:

- Vulnerability
- Adaptation planning processes
- Barriers to adaptation

"Key Stakeholders" were identified as those who were already working in the climate change space or who held a more strategic position in government.

"Non-state" stakeholders included scientists and members of NGOs, development organisations and parastatals.



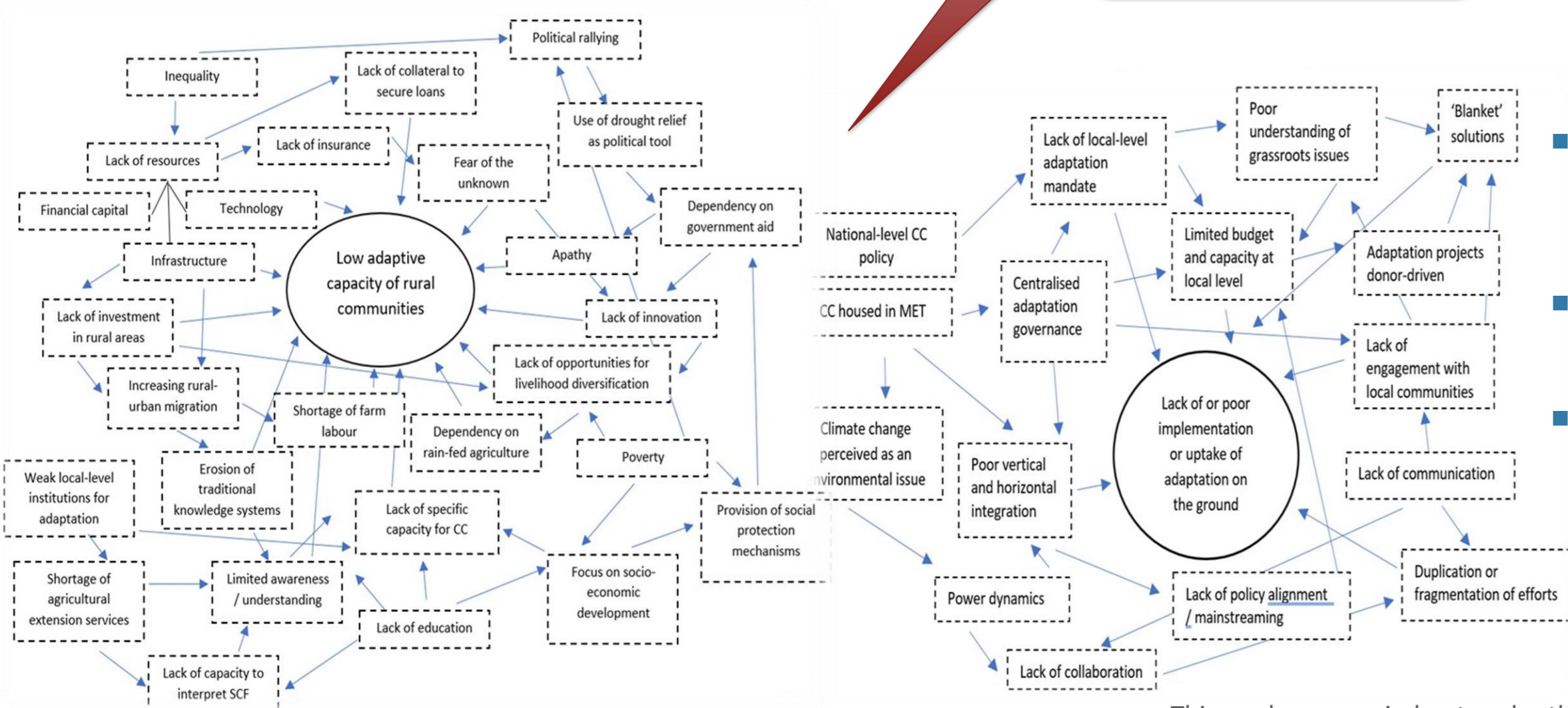
NOTE: This is not a comprehensive list of barriers to adaptation in Namibia, but rather some examples that show the range of barriers that arise in the planning, implementation and upscaling of adaptation initiatives.

Beyond categories

As a starting point, categories are a useful analytical tool that can help to improve our knowledge of what challenges exist in the adaptation field. However, categories are also one-dimensional and so limit our understanding of the complexity of barriers and their underlying context, which often calls for more targeted adaptation interventions rather than 'blanket' approaches.

It is therefore important to appreciate the local context within which adaptation takes place, and to recognize that barriers do not act in isolation but rather interact in multiple ways across scales. It is the interactions between these barriers that can cause cumulative impacts to arise, thereby increasing the vulnerability of communities and households.

Barriers to adaptation are **complex, context-specific and interact across scales**. An **integrated approach** to addressing barriers is therefore needed.



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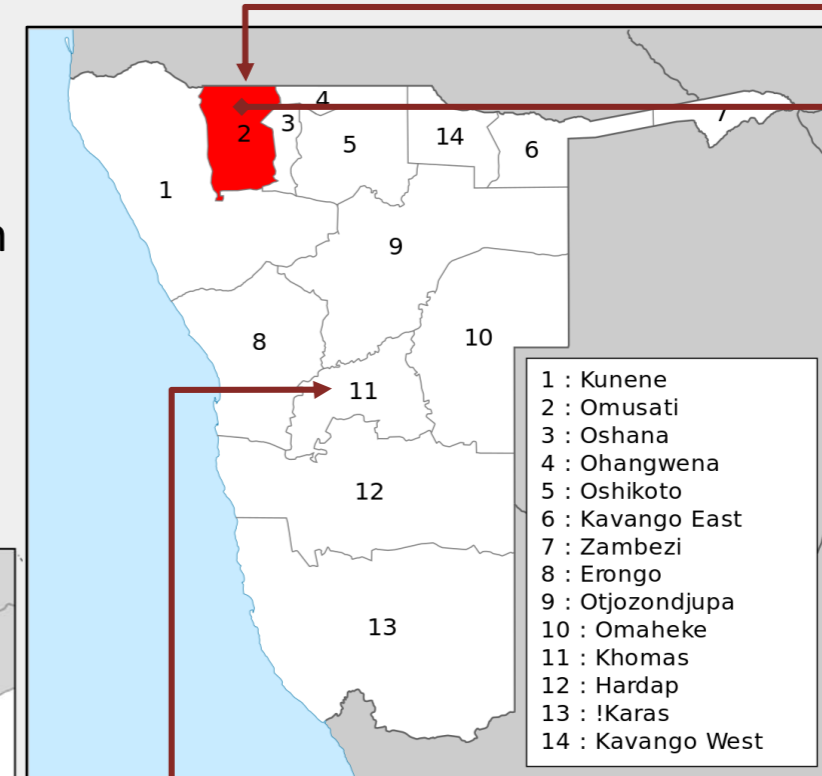
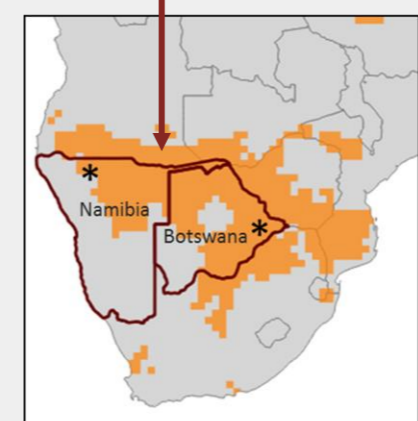
What are barriers?

- Conditions or obstacles that impede the effectiveness of an adaptation strategy.
- "Obstacles that can be overcome with concerted effort, creative management, change of thinking, prioritization, and related shifts in resources, land uses, institutions, etc."

*(Moser and Ekstrom, 2010)

Where did we work?

Namibia & Botswana are ASSAR's southern Africa study site countries



Windhoek, Namibia's capital city, is where **national-level** government stakeholders and 'non-state' stakeholders were interviewed

Omusati Region is ASSAR's main study site in Namibia. Here, we interviewed **regional-level** government stakeholders

Onesi constituency in the Omusati Region is where we interviewed **local-level** government stakeholders

What types of barriers did we find?

CATEGORY	EXAMPLES	Icon
Financial	Limited availability of and access to funding for adaptation interventions; lack of insurance and no collateral to secure loans	
Technological	Lack of infrastructure, technology and technical skills	
Institutional	Lack of co-ordination, integration and communication across governance scales; limited capacity for the implementation of adaptation policies and programmes; prioritization of socio-economic development needs over climate change adaptation	
Informational	Uncertainty of climate change projections; limited knowledge of appropriate adaptation interventions	
Ecological	Natural agro-constraints due to aridity, water scarcity, poor soil fertility and high climate variability that is characteristic of drylands	
Socio-cultural	Belief that climate change is 'God's work'; strong cultural attachment to livestock and traditional ways of farming; concern for immediate gain vs. long-term resilience; perception of climate change as an environmental issue; fear of the unknown	

What might enable adaptation?

- To address the barriers to adaptation more effectively and sustainably, a more integrated, strategic and culturally-specific approach is required.
- It is useful to identify and work with champions (who may be religious or traditional leaders) to drive the climate change agenda and leverage opportunities for adaptation funding and support.
- Improved collaboration between sectors and governance scales is needed, as is greater sharing of climate information and adaptation options.
- A greater effort to align policy priorities and integrate science with traditional knowledge is needed.
- Multisector and multiscale participatory processes that enable engagement with and between representative stakeholders is important for collaborative planning, for building relationships and networks and for including the most marginalised in decision-making processes.



*Reference: Moser, S. and Ekstrom, J. 2010. A framework to diagnose barriers to climate change adaptation. PNAS. 107 (51):1-5.

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