



***Decentralised governance & climate change adaptation:***

**Exploring differential impacts & expectations at the subnational & local levels in East Africa**

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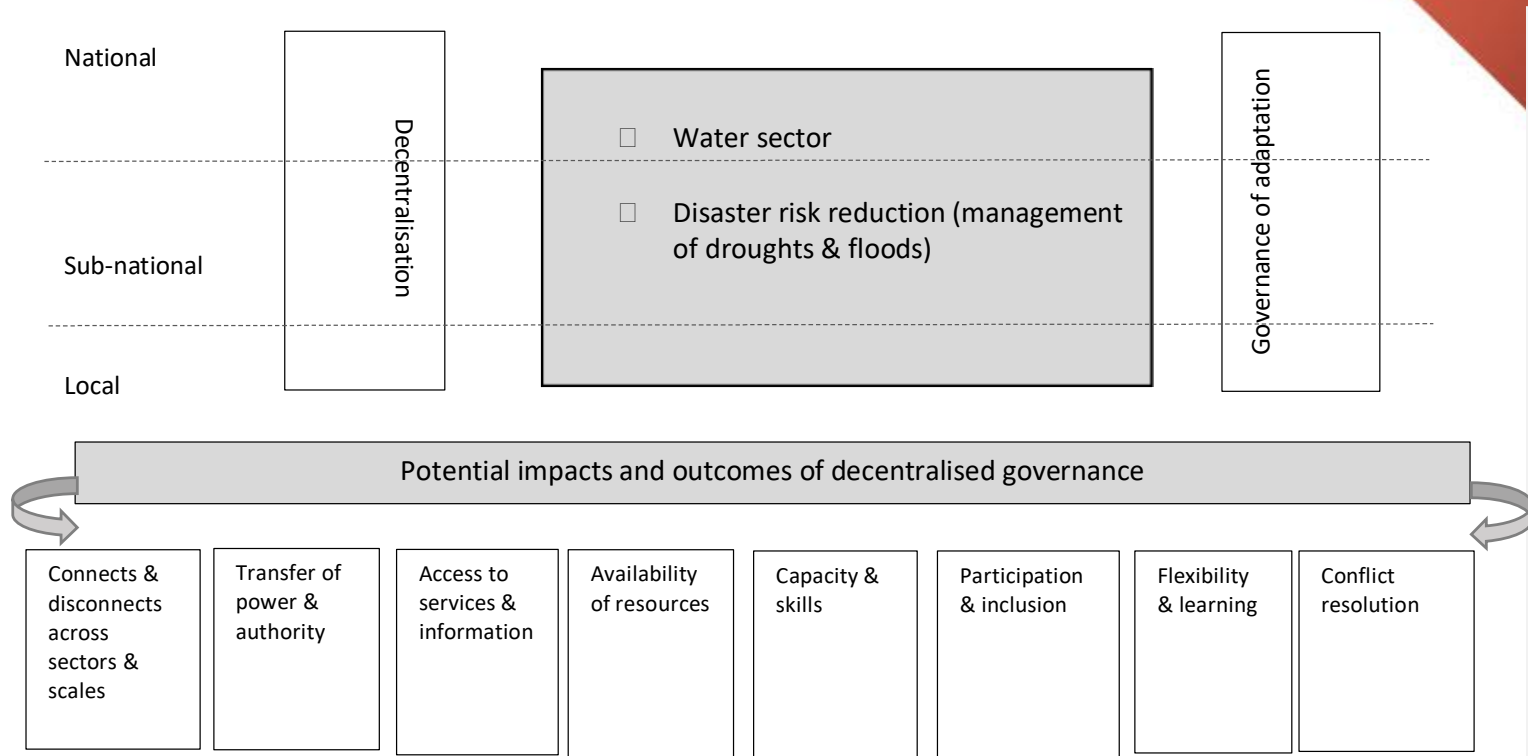


# Governance of adaptation in East Africa

- ❖ While decentralisation remains an important policy item in East Africa, there exists limited empirical evidence on **its effects on local adaptation processes**. **Mixed successes** elsewhere.
- ❖ Examines **the impacts of decentralised governance structures & planning processes on adaptation in water & disaster risk reduction** & various governance dimensions – from **policy drivers, planning processes to local interactions**.
- ❖ Case studies in **Awash, Ethiopia & Isiolo, Kenya** (representing some of the driest regions of East Africa)
- ❖ Based on diverse perspectives from a range of stakeholders at national, subnational & community levels
- ❖ **Semi-structured interviews & group discussions** during fieldwork in Kenya (March'16 & Feb'17) & Ethiopia (April'16 & Nov'17). In total, **44 interviews** (26 in Kenya & 18 in Ethiopia).

# Potential impacts of decentralised governance of water & DRR

## Conceptual framework



**Figure 1. Conceptual framework: potential impacts of decentralised governance of water and DRR**

# Impacts of decentralisation

## 1) Connects & disconnects across scales & sectors

- ❖ **Lack of coordination & integration between different sectors & levels** of government & with activities of other non-state actors; **incoherence between planning & development cycles**; more **pronounced disconnects** between **national & sub-national** units
- ❖ Good practice: The **County Steering Group**, coordinated by the NDMA in Kenya includes representatives from county & national governments, development partners, CBOs & NGOs.

## 2) Transfer of power & authority

- ❖ **Varying degree** of transfer of authority in two countries (despite incomplete devolution, substantial power at county & local levels in Kenya; fragmented transfer of authority in Ethiopia)
- ❖ Positive impacts: Devolved power enabling lower levels to **respond to the local needs** more effectively; NDMA's setting up of Ward & County Adaptation Planning Committees – better coordination.

### **3) Access to services & information**

- ❖ Improved water management having **positive impacts on livelihoods**, especially for pastoralist women & children. However, mixed expectation of service delivery at the local level (e.g. devolution ridiculed as 'devil-ution' in Kenya).
- ❖ Pastoralists & agro-pastoralists have **better access to climate services** & the exchange of climate & weather data between the national agencies & sub-national departments has been good.

### **4. Availability of resources and budgets**

- ❖ In Kenya, there are increased resources available to the county & local levels but **more bureaucracy & competition between different sectors**.
- ❖ In Ethiopia, Woreda & Kebele levels have problems of **resource constraints**. E.g. Woreda governments do not receive additional money (only food aid) during drought & floods.

## 5. Capacity, staffing & leadership skills

- ❖ **Capacity deficit** is a major concern, particularly at the lower levels. Sub-national & local actors & institutions face a lot of pressure when emergencies happen. **Lack of effective tools - reactive approach** as against forward-looking one.
- ❖ **External support** (such of CARE for early warning systems on floods & drought in Ethiopia; IIED for Kenya's Adaptation Consortium) has been useful.

## 6. Participation & inclusion

- ❖ **Notable but varying degrees of success** in strengthening participation. E.g. public consultation as a mandatory process in Kenya; creation of **new hybrid spaces** (e.g. formalisation of customary Dedha committees).
- ❖ Political patronage and clan-based system still persist. Participation of marginalized groups is still **symbolic or tokenistic** rather than being genuine or substantive.

## **7. Flexibility and learning:**

- ❖ There has been **enhanced flexibility and learning** in innovating & adapting what works & what does not in responding to water crisis & climate risks.
- ❖ E.g. Isiolo government's attempts to improve water services, protect water resources & avoid unnecessary costs for vehicles and emergency response; **formalisation of customary institutions** not only offering flexibility in water management but also having **equity impacts**.

## **8. Conflict resolution:**

- ❖ **Reduced conflicts due to improved water access & use & better DRR responses.** The role of local communities (e.g. WRUAs in Kenya, water point committees in Ethiopia) & local elders also has positive impacts.
- ❖ However, there are **also increasing contestations** regarding dam site decision, agricultural intensification, cross-boundary issues, betwn. pastoralists & agro-pastoralists, betwn. politicians & bureaucrats.

# Conclusion

- ❖ **One cannot just cherry-pick what they like about devolution. There are some unintended consequences too.** Both positive & negative impacts need to be compared & contrasted to understand its overall effects.
- ❖ Decentralisation is creating **new spaces for governance of water & DRR sectors, with both opportunities & challenges** that may enhance or undermine adaptation.
- ❖ **Decentralisation is by no means a guarantee for successful adaptation governance if it is not accompanied by attendant capacity building, knowledge transfer, policy synchronisation, devolution of power & resources, & wider participation of local actors.**
- ❖ **Need of horizontal & vertical integration** incorporating the cross-scales & sectors of adaptation governance, particularly in linking different levels of decision-making & addressing issues of coordination, nestedness, capacity building & knowledge sharing.



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