

Our work in Africa and India would be impossible without the help and continuous support of people who open the doors for us and connect us with key stakeholders in the different research sites.

This *Spotlight* acknowledges a few of these champions and takes the opportunity to thank them for their outstanding commitment to their communities and for promoting ASSAR's cause.

*the* ASSAR












SP  TLIGHT

*on*

Champions

# Contents

September 2017

-  **The makings of an ASSAR champion**  
*By Daniel Morchain, Lucia Scodanibbio and Julia Davies*
-  **Championing wise and participatory water management in Maharashtra**  
*By Vikas Prakash Joshi*
-  **IIHS's bridge to the rural communities of Kolar District**  
*By Arjun Srinivas*
-  **Tate Malakia: Inspiring hope in Onesi**  
*By Julia Davies*
-  **Dynamite comes in small packages**  
*By Prof Hillary Masundire*
-  **Championing invaluable community-researcher relationships in Ghana's Upper West Region**  
*By Birgit Ottermann*
-  **Paving the ground for action in Mali's Koutiala District**  
*By Birgit Ottermann*
-  **A school principal working wonders in difficult circumstances**  
*By Birgit Ottermann*
-  **About ASSAR**
-  **ASSAR Outputs**
-  **ASSAR Partners**

## Some Recent Project Highlights

### Meetings and Stakeholder events

[Kenya Participatory Scenario Analysis workshops](#) (June 2017)  
[Namibia Second Transformative Scenario Planning workshop](#) (July 2017)  
[India First Transformative Scenario Planning workshop](#) (July 2017)  
[ASSAR Fourth Annual Meeting in Ghana](#) (July 2017)  
[Ghana Youth Conference on Climate Change & Sustainable Development](#) (Aug 2017)  
ATREE workshop: Field ecology course on invasive plants (Aug 2017)

### Capacity building

[ASSAR's participation at UCT Climate School](#) (July 2017)  
[Small Opportunities Grant \(SOG\): On a road trip to find common ground](#)

### Reflections

[Taking the impact of ASSAR to heart](#) (July 2017)  
[Facing the unknown can help us shape the future](#) (August 2017)  
[RIU: how can climate change researchers have more impact?](#) (August 2017)  
[My research into ASSAR workshops: The story so far ...](#) (August 2017)

## Upcoming Events

### September-December, 2017

Ethiopia Participatory Scenario Analysis workshops (1-16 Oct and 1-7 Nov) .....*Ethiopia*  
Botswana Transformative Scenario Planning workshop (19-20 Oct) ..*Bobirwa, Botswana*  
Ghana Influencing Workshop with Oxfam (14-17 Nov) .....*Accra, Ghana*  
India Transformative Scenario Planning workshop (5-6 Dec) .....*Bangalore, India*  
Urban Policy Dialogues (UPD) at IIHS (Nov) .....*Bangalore, India*  
Mali National Level Engagement ..... *Mali*

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# The makings of an ASSAR champion

## Opening doors and sharing wisdom

ASSAR's research sites are in most cases not situated in the same locations as our research teams, who therefore dip in and out of them to conduct interviews, workshops, surveys, consultations and many other data gathering activities. Preparing for such fieldwork would be impossible, were it not for local individuals who open doors for the research teams, help to organise community members into meetings, advise on timing and locations, and provide invaluable contextual knowledge that helps to ensure our research is relevant, culturally appropriate and informed.

In the process of interacting with ASSAR researchers, many of these champions also learn more about the process of undertaking research, climate change adaptation, the differential vulnerabilities that occur in our research sites (that often go underlooked) and the responses that can be taken.

After three and a half years of the ASSAR project, we finally acknowledge the role of these tireless and vital individuals, that pave the way for our researchers and enable it all to happen.

**Lucia Scodanibbio**, ASSAR Project Coordinator, UCT

## Uniting people to achieve a common goal

**Researchers** increasingly recognise the important role played by champions in driving climate change adaptation and mitigation agendas at the **local level**.

Such a person can hold various positions and may be a politician, a public official, an industry or academic expert, or even a representative from an NGO or civil society interest group.

Champions emerge most strongly amongst individuals who are passionate about and committed to resolving an issue, proactive about identifying and **leveraging opportunities**, who are optimistic, insightful and are able to suppress the need to be an **expert authority**.

In addressing **complex problems** such as climate change, it is necessary that these individuals play an '**integrative leadership**' role to unite diverse actor groups across sectoral boundaries to achieve a common goal.

**Julia Davies**, ASSAR Senior Research Assistant, UCT

## Championing climate and social justice

What makes a champion? I think strong values about social justice can inspire and influence. But equally important are the attitudes that can turn our ideas into reality: being solution-driven, hardworking, inclusive, fair, transparent, empathetic, dissatisfied with the way things are ... and passionate.

Being a leader in the context of climate change requires seriously challenging development practice and governance beyond the boundaries of what 'climate people' may consider their remit.

If we don't move into the action space, then our challenge to what's wrong about development and adaptation will be elitist and easily forgotten.

'Sustainability leadership', in contrast to traditional views based on an almighty strongman or an enlightened visionary, suggests that everyone can develop leadership skills, and that the trick is collaboration. We can develop these skills by connecting with nature, exploring our inner selves and values, creating opportunities to reflect with others, learn together and jointly design adaptation – or development, or life – pathways.

In this issue of the *Spotlight*, we look at climate and development champions within the ASSAR consortium and its partners. Their inspiring stories give us hope that the world is and will be a wonderful place for our children to inhabit.

**Daniel Morchain**, Co-Principal Investigator, Oxfam GB



Photo: Lucia Scodanibbio



**Prof Pradeep Purandare, an engineer and retired professor from India's prestigious Water and Land Management Institute (WALMI), has spent over 30 years searching for and promoting solutions to different challenges, ranging from practice to policy in the water, agriculture and climate change sectors in Aurangabad, in the dry, semi-arid Marathwada region of Maharashtra.**

"Prof Purandare is a very important connection between different stakeholders and WOTR," says Eshwer Kale, researcher at WOTR. "He has highlighted crucial updates on contemporary issues in the water sector in Maharashtra and often shared his rich thoughts and ideas with us on relevant issues. Although by profession Prof Purandare was active in teaching, his contribution in research, training and, most importantly, water policy dialogue and advocacy is invaluable. In his recently published book in Marathi, *Panya Shappath*, which translates as 'The Water Oath', Prof Purandare highlights major updates on contemporary issues in the water sector in Maharashtra."

Prof Purandare was first drawn to the work of WOTR through reports of their work in the media, as well as his own interest in the watershed development sector. "I have had two very personal experiences with WOTR in the recent past," he says. "WOTR is the knowledge partner for Paani Foundation, a massive campaign launched by film celebrities with support of corporates to conserve water in villages. I am also involved in WOTR's work in Jalna district where WOTR has initiated the process of TSP (Transformative Scenario Planning) to understand the current water issues in a better manner and think of what the future situation could be in the district regarding water and how we should be prepared for that. I especially liked the 'open debate' which WOTR encourages at different levels on various issues."

According to Prof Purandare, one of the best ways to deal with the increasingly significant challenges of climate change, especially on agriculture, is to focus on green technology and climate adaptation, as well as research on climate-resistant seeds and crops. "Water management structures have to be bolstered, as well as long-term planning for extreme events, which are becoming more common."

Maharashtra and several other states have passed

## Championing wise and participatory water management in Maharashtra

by **Vikas Prakash Joshi**

*Communications Officer at Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR)*

groundwater management laws, such as the Groundwater Management Act. While he believes that the laws and rules are satisfactory, Prof Purandare says there are problems with their implementation: "Those who have to implement the regulations have to be made aware of them and their operational provisions. For example, there are clauses against illegal sand mining from rivers in the Maharashtra Groundwater (Development and Management) Act, 2009, but these remain on paper only."

Watershed development has been a core focus of WOTR's work for almost 25 years in a number of semi-arid regions of India but, according to Prof Purandare, watershed development has a limited shelf life. "After the watershed work is over, there are other necessary supporting activities but they are often not done. Water-efficient techniques of crop cultivation and irrigation have to be promoted to make watershed development interventions truly effective."

In terms of the future of water management in Maharashtra and India, Prof Purandare says it is very important that the National Water Framework Law (which is currently in the drafting phase and provisions for state-wise usage/water sharing) is adopted by all states. "Structural changes in water usage are also required, while the Central Ground Water Board and Central Water Commission need to be restructured so that the voices of NGOs and other stakeholders are also taken into account. The era of supply-side management of water is over. It is time to focus on demand-side water management. Recently, the State Level Expert Committee on Integrated State Water Plan prepared the Godavari river basin plan. In the plan, the committee made it clear that demand-side management is the need of the future," Prof Purandare concludes.

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# South ASIA

## IIHS's bridge to the rural communities of Kolar District

by **Arjun Srinivas**

*ASSAR South Asia Researcher at Indian Institute for Human Settlements*

**Mr Shivshankar from Mysore Resettlement and Development Authority (MYRADA) is a programme officer for Kolar, a district in the state of Karnataka that is a key site for the ASSAR India research led by the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS). Situated at a distance of 70km from Bangalore, it is a district that has been adversely affected by declining and erratic rainfall over the past couple of decades, and has consequently seen large-scale migration and transition in livelihoods. MYRADA has been an instrumental partner for IIHS and helped facilitate much of the field research.**

"When we were just starting off our research in Kolar, way back in November 2015, one of the first few people we met was Mr Shivshankar," Chandni Singh, a researcher at IIHS, recalls. "The impromptu visit turned into a two-hour-long conversation about his experiences in the district: from drought incidence and changing farming practices to migration patterns and local health issues. Many of his insights across the year-long fieldwork, became key research themes. Mr Shivshankar was also most helpful in keeping our data collection on track – from recruiting surveyors to making sure they met deadlines. Overall, conducting the research in Kolar was greatly facilitated by him and I look forward to collaborating with him for future work."

Shivshankar specialises in the area of watershed management, which is of critical importance in the Kolar district since it has no source of perennial irrigation. He leads the MYRADA-Spoorthy Training Centre in Bangarpet Taluk, Kolar, that conducts capacity building programmes for various developmental organisations, especially on watershed management. He also oversees various social programmes throughout the district and was therefore IIHS's single point of contact for most operational and contractual particulars.

Shivshankar prides himself on his direct involvement with the communities. Having spent 15 years working in Kolar District, he has a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the community's challenges with regard to climate change and natural resource management. His support was essential, both in terms of providing a local context to the research, as well as operationally in terms of coordinating the focus group discussions and the household surveys.

Regarding local climate change, he says: "There has been a considerable change in the climatic patterns as compared to 10-15 years ago. Rainfall is declining and there are more frequent dry spells. The impact is heightened due to the erosion of traditional techniques of water management and intensive agriculture."

Shivshankar says MYRADA decided to collaborate with the ASSAR project since the researchers can develop insights and solutions:

"We work and interact with the community, and our expectation is that with the knowledge generated, ASSAR will help us help the communities."

He adds that the technical skills of the staff were enhanced through the household surveys, which were administered digitally through electronic tablets as part of the ASSAR project.

He concludes by saying that his expectation from the ASSAR team is that the insights generated are shared with MYRADA, and also hopes that the recommendations could be used to design some developmental activities that can be initiated with the community.

"Having personally worked with Mr Shivshankar, and coordinated with him for most operational aspects of our research, I can vouch for his professionalism and helpful disposition. He extended utmost co-operation to us throughout the duration of our fieldwork, and helped introduce us to key informants. Furthermore, the local MYRADA staff always accompanied us on the field and served as a bridge to the community. In this regard, we benefited from the credibility of the organisation, as MYRADA was easily recognisable for the communities we worked with.

"We hope to continue our association with MYRADA and Mr Shivshankar, as we head into the final phases of the project," ends researcher Arjun Srinivas.





## Tate Malakia: Inspiring hope in Onesi

by **Julia Davies**

ASSAR Southern Africa Senior  
Research Assistant,  
University of Cape Town

**Malakia (Ma.la.ki.a) /μαλακία/ noun. A Hebrew version of the biblical name Malachi, meaning “angel,” “prophet” or “messenger of God”.**

Malakia Shoombe is the Secretary of the Uukolonkadhi Traditional Authority of Onesi Constituency in north-central Namibia, a position that he has held since 1996. He is also, like his father and brother before him, the headman of his local village.

Malakia is a husband, a father of six and – in the eyes of ASSAR – a local champion. Malakia became involved in ASSAR a number of years ago when he assisted ASSAR students and researchers from the University of Namibia with their field work.

He has been a great help ever since and, according to postdoctoral research fellow Salma Hegga, he is “one of the most generous traditional authority secretaries any researcher could wish to work with ... he is keen to assist you in every way”.

Malakia is well-known and respected amongst the locals. He has also experienced, first hand, many of the climate-related challenges that have impacted the region, which is highly vulnerable to both droughts and floods.

# Southern AFRICA

Malakia’s invaluable local knowledge is complemented by his understanding of the value of research. In particular, he recognises the importance of collaboration and has developed the qualities of an integrative leader. “It’s important for every stakeholder to participate,” says Malakia, “and when there is a meeting or a workshop, we have to attend that workshop so that we can bring something into our region, because together we can make a difference.”

Malakia has proven to be an effective link between ASSAR and the local people in Onesi. “He is very helpful and understands ASSAR so well that we do not need to keep briefing him about ourselves,” says ASSAR Namibia’s Ester Nangolo. “We now only go ahead and request him to organise a particular group of community members for our meetings or interviews and he is doing well in getting everyone together.”

When asked why he helps ASSAR as much as he does, Malakia’s simple answer is that it is his duty as a traditional leader and that he does it for the good of his people, in the hope that something tangible might emerge from the project that would benefit his community:

“We are the lucky ones, to have our region and constituency selected to be assisted by the ASSAR project. And even us, we learn more also from ASSAR. Because it opened our mind that in case we find ourselves in a different situation, we have to adapt to that situation in a way that can help us, by surviving during the flood and during the drought. But we still need more information or assistance from ASSAR. Maybe in future there will be something visible which was brought out by ASSAR in Onesi,” says Malakia.

The key question is now, what can ASSAR do to give back to Malakia and to help uplift the vulnerable people of Onesi, as they struggle to build resilience to the impacts of climate change?

*“I have noted that Mr Malakia has been very influential to the ASSAR research project ... I honestly think he has contributed a lot to the success of ASSAR engagements at village and constituency levels.”*

Margaret Angula, Namibia Focal Point

## Dynamite comes in small packages

by **Prof Hillary Masundire**

*Botswana Focal Point, University of Botswana*



**Miss Lerato Sebola is the Assistant District Commissioner stationed at Bobonong, the headquarters of the Bobirwa sub-district where ASSAR is working in Botswana. This rather diminutive lady is indeed like the proverbial 'dynamite comes in small packages'! She has seen ASSAR right from the beginning in December 2013 to date.**

I first met Mma Sebola in December 2013 when I went to introduce the ASSAR project. She received the ASSAR delegation, comprising Kaona Moloko and myself, and made sure we saw all the key personnel including the tribal authorities, the district administration staff, the sub-district council as well as heads of government departments based in the sub-district. This first visit was critical to all the subsequent ASSAR activities in the sub-district.

In January 2014, a large ASSAR team comprising University of Botswana (UB) and University of Cape Town (UCT) team members went for the launch of the ASSAR project. Mma Sebola ably organised meetings with all the chiefs and headmen in Bobirwa, as well as with key government officers. ASSAR was afforded the opportunity to address the community at a traditional 'Kgotle' meeting, attended by over 200 people. These are the meetings that helped us to get an idea of the people’s perceptions on climate change as well as what they perceive as manifestations of the impacts of climate change.

In 2015, the ASSAR team organised a Vulnerability and Risk Assessment (VRA) workshop in Bobonong. As usual, Mma Sebola worked tirelessly to ensure that our VRA workshop was of the highest quality, for example through identifying the VRA Knowledge Group. Mma Sebola then worked, and continues to

work with yet another champion, Mma Moepeng, the Senior Assistant Council Secretary. In 2016, Mma Sebola headed a delegation from Bobirwa to Gaborone to take part in a Transformative Scenario Planning (TSP) training workshop.

We are about to launch the household survey and TSP in Bobirwa. With Mma Sebola as a friend of ASSAR, success in these activities is virtually guaranteed.

*“ASSAR has capacitated the community and key stakeholders in Bobirwa area on issues related to climate change, vulnerability and adaptation.”*  
Lerato Sebola

In January, we plan to have a VRA training workshop for district development officers and district economic planners, following the successful Bobonong VRA workshop. We will rely on Mma Sebola to motivate and mobilise other districts to see value in the VRA process as a planning tool for district and sub-district level development planning and implementation.

ASSAR has been blessed to have someone like Mma Sebola, who has remained in the project area from its inception. Thank you Mma Sebola – our ASSAR Champion in Botswana.

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## Championing invaluable community-researcher relationships in Ghana's Upper West Region

by **Birgit Ottermann**

*ASSAR Communications Officer*

**Stanislaus Nasaal, Projects Manager of the Nandom Deanery Integrated Rural Development Programme (NANDIRDEP) in the Upper West Region, has been with the ASSAR Ghana research team right from the start – much of their success is thanks to Nasaal's in-depth knowledge, important networks and continuous support.**

"Mr Nasaal is one of the few individuals in our research area with in-depth knowledge and experience on environmental and livelihood issues," says Prince Ansah, a technical officer at the University of Ghana. "His years of development work in the Lawra and Nandom districts (Upper West Region) has built his capacity and provided important networks, which the ASSAR Ghana team has benefited from tremendously. With the help of Mr Nasaal and his institution (NANDIRDEP), we were afforded the opportunity to meet and engage with relevant stakeholders who have played important roles in defining ASSAR research outputs."

Nasaal is a well-liked and respected leader in his district, who is regularly consulted on many environmental and agricultural issues. Besides being Projects Manager for NANDIRDEP since 2004, Nasaal has also held the position of chairman for various institutions and groups including the Nandom Rural Bank, Nandom Town Council, Nandom Water and Sanitation Development Board and Management Committee, and Serve Child Nandom (CHALICE). A married man with five children, he also has a big heart and his home is usually open to many children from the communities in the district.

The ASSAR Ghana team first met Nasaal when he was the secretary of the Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) platform in Nandom District. "As the secretary, he assisted the ASSAR team with the organisation of logistics for the first district-level Regional Diagnostic Study (RDS) stakeholder engagement," Ansah explains.

*Photo: Prosper Adiku*



The team's relationship with Nasaal was further strengthened during the regional research phase when researchers and students relied heavily on his expertise for community identification, entry and data collection.

Ophelia Kaba-Ayamba, an environmental science PhD-student at the University of Ghana, has much praise for Nasaal: "I have never lacked anything since beginning my research work in Nandom. Mr Nasaal offered great support for my research experiment, facilitated my transportation to the field and even dedicated his son to assist me in my field work. As if that's not enough, my experimental materials were also stored at his home! He really is like a God-sent angel to me."

According to Nasaal, working with ASSAR has also impacted his own thinking: "My collaboration with ASSAR has influenced my thinking on the power of teamwork and the need to plan together ahead of time. I have also gained new insight into the dynamics and role of politics and governance in contributing to development through constant interaction with relevant stakeholders in the district."

Currently, the team is engaging Nasaal and his institution as partners to the development and implementation of the ASSAR Grants for Local Adaptation Support (GLAS) project in the district. NANDIRDEP will serve as the local host for the GLAS project and will also mobilise stakeholders to participate in the capacity-building workshops.

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# West AFRICA

## Paving the ground for action in Mali's Koutiala District

by **Birgit Ottermann**

*ASSAR Communications Officer*

**"Siaka Coulibaly knows the field so well and we always consult him because of his technical expertise and his knowledge of the local conditions. Without his support, we would have had far more challenges in meeting the right people in the region to engage with," says Edmond Totin, research associate at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), ASSAR's partner in Mali. Totin has had the pleasure of working side-by-side with Coulibaly in the district of Koutiala, where the team is conducting its research.**

Coulibaly, an administrator for the NGO Association of Awakening to Sustainable Development (AMEDD), has a long work experience in Koutiala and belongs to a wide network of stakeholders.

"He is very important to us as he plays an intermediary role – connecting the project team with the right people that we need to know to make things happen on the ground!" says Totin. "The organisation AMEDD works on projects that address similar issues as ASSAR. Siaka's technical capacity, combined with his long-term experience in the region and the trust he gained among the local community and partners all make him a champion for ASSAR."

AMEDD is a prominent organisation, engaged in most of the agriculture projects in Mali. Besides working as an administrator of the NGO, Coulibaly also coordinates many projects on climate change and natural resource management within the same organisation. In addition, he is in charge of communication and develops radio programmes around climate change and natural resource management that are broadcast in the district.

Coulibaly was keen to collaborate with the ASSAR team as his organisation was already involved in many of the ASSAR project's activities. "AMEDD is a key partner of ASSAR. Activities promoted by the project are all in line with our vision of supporting sustainable development in the district. I've seen how natural resources have been depleted here, and I am keen to support all initiatives that can help in improving the living conditions of our smallholder farmers."

Coulibaly is passionate about the need to provide accurate climate information in the region: "Seasonal climate variability plays an important role in the production risks that our farmers face. The provision of accurate climate forecasts can help to reduce these risks."



While ASSAR gained much from Coulibaly's expertise and connections, he admits that he has also benefited from the relationship:

"Working with the ASSAR project has given me the opportunity to learn how to develop participatory scenarios and responsive strategies by engaging different stakeholders' views and perspectives."

Totin concludes: "Siaka is a very dedicated person and enjoys assisting us. He is a true champion and we are very proud of his commitment to support ASSAR's actions in the country."



**Samuel Mutabari is the headmaster of a primary school in the small village of Kachiuru in Kenya. He is highly regarded in the village and provides a vital service to the community. He is also instrumental in facilitating all of the different types of research the ASSAR East Africa team has undertaken in the village.**

According to Mark Tebboth, ASSAR senior research associate from the University of East Anglia (UEA), Mutabari has helped with all of the research the team has carried out in Kachiuru over the past two to three years.

He first met the school principal when he worked in Kachiuru in 2015: “Samuel is a very friendly and amicable person who works wonders in very difficult circumstances. He has been instrumental in supporting all the research that I have done in the village of Kachiuru. Without him, I don’t think the research would have been anywhere near as insightful as it has been.”

Initially, Mutabari supported the ASSAR team’s Rapid Rural Appraisal work when they first started working in the village. This was followed by the school principal helping the team to enumerate their household survey; assisting Tebboth in interviewing people about migration under the Small Opportunities Grant; and playing an important role in the success of the Participatory Scenario Analysis (PSA) workshop in the village.

# East AFRICA

A school principal working wonders in difficult circumstances  
by **Birgit Ottermann**  
*ASSAR Communications Officer*

Mutabari still remembers the day he met the ASSAR East Africa team for the first time: “When the ASSAR personnel came to Kachiuru, they needed someone who could assist them with their research. The area being very remote; they could not get someone in the village with the right education to assist them. A villager directed them to the school for assistance. When they came to my office, they introduced themselves and their mission. After a lengthy discussion, I agreed to assist them without compromising my job and also the quality of the research. We agreed on a schedule.”

According to Mutabari, the negative impact of climate change is felt in the region with a marked decrease in rains. “Community members report that they used to get enough rains. But lately there is very little or sometimes no rain for long periods of time, which has made the area become almost like a desert. Additionally, most of the people in the area depend on trees as a livelihood source, which has led to most trees being cut down.”

Recently, Mutabari also worked with UEA researchers Nitya Rao and Jennifer Leavy to interview people for the intra-household research sub-project. Rao echoes Tebboth’s praise for Mutabari’s invaluable support:

“Samuel was a tremendous help for us. Being the school teacher, and living in the village, he knows everybody there and was able to introduce us to whoever we wanted. While perhaps knowing too much to be a researcher himself, it was very helpful to use him as a sounding board and cross-checking stories that people told us. One woman, for instance, gave us a long and complex interview, which was contradicted by almost every other person in the village. We turned to Samuel to get clarity on the relationships that were being spoken about. In this sense, he was an invaluable support to our research team – facilitating, introducing and verifying, when required.”

Mutabari says that working with ASSAR has given him the opportunity to learn more about the carrying out of research, and about climate change and its impact on people's lives. He adds that it has also given him the opportunity to interact, share and make friends with new people both locally and internationally.

“I am greatly humbled to work with the ASSAR team and hope that their research findings will help the Kachiuru community to adapt better to the effects of climate change in the region.”



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# ABOUT ASSAR

## WHY WE FOCUS ON SEMI-ARID REGIONS

As the global impacts of climate change become more clearly understood, so too does the need for people to effectively respond and adapt to these changes. Home to hundreds of millions of people, the semi-arid regions of Africa and Asia are particularly vulnerable to climate-related impacts and risks. These climate-change hot-spots are highly dynamic systems that already experience harsh climates, adverse environmental change, and a relative paucity of natural resources. People here may be further marginalised by high levels of poverty and rapidly changing socio-economic, governance and development contexts. Although many people in these regions already display remarkable resilience, these multiple and often interlocking pressures are expected to amplify in the coming decades. Therefore, it is essential to understand how to empower people, local organisations and governments to adapt to climate change in a way that minimises vulnerability and promotes long-term resilience.



To date, most adaptation efforts have focused on reactive, short-term and site-specific solutions to climate-related vulnerabilities. Although important, these responses often fail to address the root causes of vulnerability, nor shed light on how to proactively spur larger-scale and longer-term adaptation that has positive effects on socio-economic development. Using both research and practice to address this information shortfall, ASSAR (Adaptation in Semi-Arid Regions) seeks to produce future-focused and societally-relevant knowledge of potential pathways to wellbeing through adaptation.

## Our research framework

ASSAR's overarching research objective is to use insights from multiple-scale, interdisciplinary work to improve the understanding of the barriers, enablers and limits to effective, sustained and widespread adaptation out to the 2030s. Working in a coordinated manner across seven countries in India, East Africa, West Africa and Southern Africa, ASSAR's research is case study based and strives to integrate climatic, environmental, social and economic change. The dynamics of gender roles and relations form a particularly strong theme throughout our approach.

Each of ASSAR's teams conducts regionally-relevant research focused on specific socio-ecological risks/dynamics that relate centrally to livelihood transitions, and access, use and management of land and water resources in water-stressed environments. Focal research themes in each region are: agro-intensification in West Africa; land and water access in East and Southern Africa; and land use, land cover and livelihood changes in India.

Over its five-year lifespan (2014-2018), the cross-regional comparison and integration of research findings will enable ASSAR to develop a unique and systemic understanding of the processes and factors that impede adaptation and cause vulnerability to persist.

## Putting our work in practice

To ensure that project case studies are aligned with the needs and realities of those living and working in semi-arid regions, and to increase the chances that findings and recommendations are taken up, ASSAR builds relationships with a wide spectrum of stakeholders from communities, civil society organisations, research institutions, governments and non-governmental organisations.

By guiding stakeholders through participatory scenario planning processes ASSAR aims to build a common understanding of current adaptation needs and past adaptation failings, while promoting the co-production of adaptation responses that can yield appropriate, tangible and lasting benefits. By using stakeholder mapping and analysis to better understand the power dynamics of different stakeholder groups, by working with and alongside boundary organisations and the private sector, and by engaging in effective communication, capacity building and advocacy campaigns, ASSAR seeks to inform and promote sustainable development pathways that have the best prospect for enhancing the wellbeing of the most vulnerable and/or marginalised in the coming decades.

Through these activities, ASSAR will better integrate the domains of adaptation research, policy and practice. By building the adaptive capacity of primary stakeholders, policy and decision makers, practitioners, boundary organisations, and academic researchers, this integration could bring about previously inconceivable strategies for change and transformation. In time these efforts could also contribute to a change in the attitudes and behaviours of key stakeholders, prompt easier and better access to resources by vulnerable groups, and enhance the power and agency of vulnerable groups to lessen or remove adaptation barriers, and exploit adaptation enablers.

## ANIMATED THEORY OF CHANGE

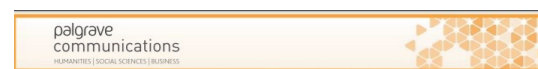


# ASSAR OUTPUTS

A selection of our outputs since June 2017. For more information see the [ASSAR website](#).

## Journal Article

Transformation, adaptation and development: relating concepts to practice



### ARTICLE

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Transformation, adaptation and development: relating concepts to practice

Roger Few<sup>1</sup>, Daniel Morchain<sup>2</sup>, Dian Spear<sup>3</sup>, Adelina Mensah<sup>4</sup> and Ramkumar Bendapudi<sup>5</sup>

**ABSTRACT** In recent years there has been a growing number of academic reviews discussing the theme of transformation and its association with adaptation to climate change. On the one hand this has stimulated exchange of ideas and perspectives on the parameters of transformation, but it has also given rise to confusion in terms of identifying what constitutes a non-incremental form of adaptation on the ground. What this article aims to do instead is help researchers and practitioners relate different interpretations of transformation to practice by proposing a typological framework for categorising forms of change that focuses on mechanisms and objectives. It then discusses how these categorisations link to the broader conceptions and critiques noted above, with the idea that this will enable those who seek to analyse or plan adaptation to better analyse what types of action are potentially constitutive of transformation. In doing so, it should equally assist in the identification and specification of critical questions that need to be asked of such activity in relation to issues of sustainability and equity.

## Photo Essay

MIRAA: Subsistence, stimulant and social glue



Interviewing people living in the arid area of eastern Kenya, ASSAR's East Africa team wants to understand how household livelihoods change as a way of adapting to climate change.

Photo essay, Jennifer Leavy describes the challenges people face when trying to make a living in the arid area of eastern Kenya, where the main cash crop is miraa.

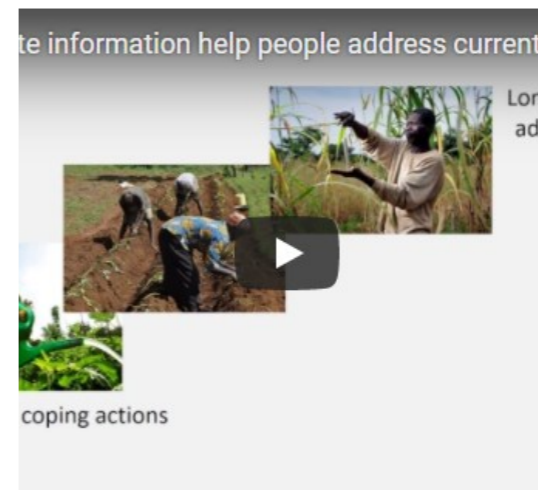
## Learning Report

What have we learned from working collaboratively on the ASSAR project?



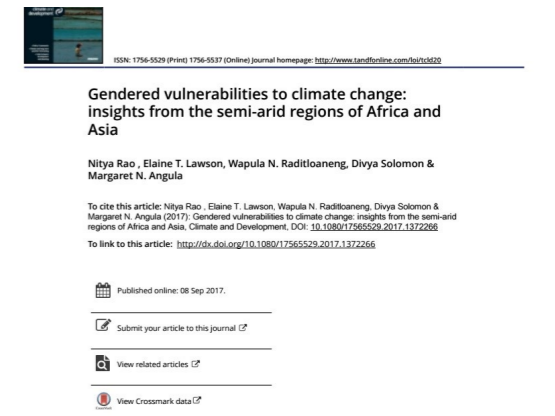
## Video

Does climate information help people address current and future climate risks?



## Journal Article

Gendered vulnerabilities to climate change: Insights from the semi-arid regions of Africa and Asia



## Information Brief

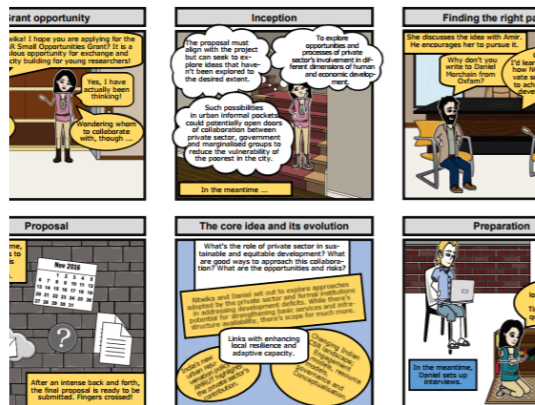
Thinking critically about the future of water security in Bengaluru, using Transformative Scenario Planning



## Cartoon Strip

On a road trip to find common ground

The cartoon strip below represents what Basu and Morchain's first exploration brought



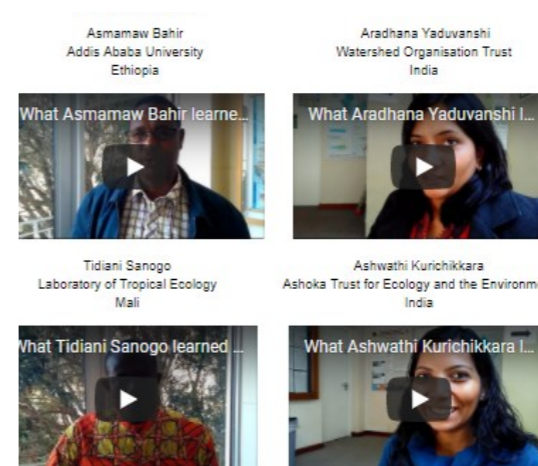
## Information Brief

Using TSP to think critically about the future of water for productive use in Omusati, Namibia



## Videos

ASSAR's participation at UCT Climate School



## Video

Experiential Learning: Farming Juggle



# ASSAR PARTNERS

The international and interdisciplinary ASSAR team comprises a mix of research and practitioner organisations, and includes groups with global reach as well as those deeply embedded in their communities.

## LEAD ORGANISATIONS



## PARTNER ORGANISATIONS



## CARIAA PROGRAMME

ASSAR is one of four hot-spot research projects in the Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia (CARIAA) programme, funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID).

