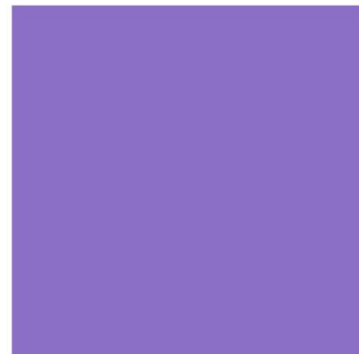
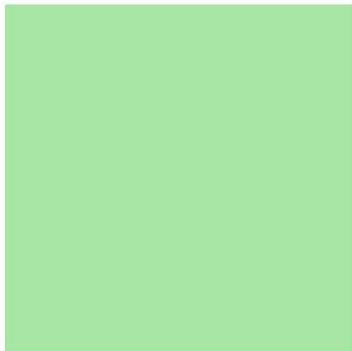




20 26 INTEGRATING CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN LOCALLY LED PROGRAMS

Report of the Vienna Practitioners' Program

Vienna, Austria | 7–10 September 2026

Co-led by GeoSphere Austria and the World Bank's Platform for Locally Led Climate Action, and hosted through the Vienna Development Knowledge Center



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1. The Vienna Practitioners' Program: A Milestone of the Learning Journey

Climate change threatens local livelihoods, infrastructure, public services, and economic activity, making it essential for development programs to address risk and resilience in their design and implementation. Global experience shows that local actors, communities, and institutions are often best placed to identify climate risks, prioritize investments, and implement solutions that respond to local realities.

Locally led climate action is central to development efforts focused on social policy. Social policy programs already work directly with households, communities, local governments, and frontline institutions, providing practical channels through which climate finance and climate information can reach the local level. They use different delivery models, including safety nets, public works, community-driven development, and livelihoods support, among others. All can effectively deliver climate finance and climate-informed support to the local level and strengthen local and national systems so that households and communities are better prepared for climate change.

The *Practitioners' Program on Integrating Climate Resilience into Locally Led Programs* responded to growing demand from governments for practical approaches to embedding climate resilience in local development initiatives. Held in Vienna from 7 to 10 September 2026, the program was co-designed by the [World Bank's Platform](#)

for [Locally Led Climate Action](#) and [GeoSphere Austria](#) and hosted by the [Vienna Development Knowledge Center](#) (VDKC). The training was made possible through financing from the Nordic Development Fund, which supports country programs alongside a broader knowledge and learning agenda promoting scalable solutions on locally led climate action.

A Learning Journey Supported by the World Bank's Platform for Locally Led Climate Action

The Vienna Practitioners' Program marked the next stage in the World Bank's evolving learning agenda on locally led climate action. The [Platform for Locally Led Climate Action](#), was established to support governments and operational teams in understanding how climate resilience can be integrated into existing development programs and delivered at scale. The first phase of learning under the platform focused on webinars and virtual exchanges. These helped build a growing community of practice around locally led approaches to addressing climate change. The second phase involved field-based South-South learning through the [Global Knowledge Exchange on Community-Driven Development for Resilience](#), held in Jakarta, Indonesia, in January 2026. This event brought together more than 100 participants from 13 countries. The November 2025 VDKC-supported workshop [From the Ground Up: Locally Led Responses Bridging Climate, Livelihoods and Resilience](#), which brought together practitioners, local governments, and World Bank teams from Central Asia, the Western Balkans, and the European Union, also complemented these peer exchanges.

Building on these initiatives, the Vienna Practitioners' Program shifted the focus toward structured training and practical application. It leveraged the World Bank's recently established Vienna Development Knowledge Center (VDKC), supported by the Austrian federal government, and the technical expertise of GeoSphere Austria, the federal institute for meteorology, climatology, geology, and geophysics and the world's oldest state-funded independent meteorological service, to equip participants with technical tools and capabilities that can be integrated into an active portfolio of World Bank-supported operations across regions. Topics included participatory climate risk assessments, climate and disaster risk

information, early warning systems, and climate-resilient local investments. This operational foundation distinguishes the program from broader peer exchanges by linking learning and technical support directly to project design, implementation, and scale-up.

The Vienna Practitioners' Program was not a one-off, standalone event. The Platform for Locally Led Climate Action is designed to foster continuous learning and peer exchange, support the application of lessons learned in operational programs, and document emerging evidence of uptake, replication, and scaling of successful approaches. The emphasis is on practical implementation: understanding what works, under what circumstances, and how lessons can be adapted across different country contexts and delivery systems.



2. Program Objectives and Learning Outcomes

The objective of the Vienna Practitioners' Program was to strengthen practitioners' capacity to integrate climate risk and resilience measures into locally led development programs. It aimed to:

- **Deepen understanding of how to translate technical climate data** into clear, relevant, and actionable information for local actors, communities, and institutions.
- **Strengthen the use of participatory climate risk assessments in programs** by learning from Austrian and country experiences and examining how multi-hazard data informs project design and implementation.
- **Address implementation challenges through peer learning and expert support** by testing ideas against real project problems, comparing country experiences, and expanding communities of practice to support implementation and continued exchange.
- **Connect learning to implementation** by observing locally led resilience approaches in practice and reflecting on their relevance to participating countries' programs, all of which receive World Bank support.

The learning journey was deliberately sequenced. Participants first established a shared understanding of why locally led approaches matter and how climate risks affect livelihoods, infrastructure, services, and economic opportunities. They then

worked through practical methods for translating climate information, conducting participatory climate risk assessments, and connecting evidence to planning. Peer exchanges and a country carousel broadened the menu of operational approaches; a multi-hazard role play and expert clinics created space to apply them; and field visits allowed participants to observe how local actors and institutions manage water, energy, circular-economy activities, and climate-smart agriculture in practice.

3. Who Participated?

The program convened delegations and project teams from **Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Indonesia, Kenya, the Kyrgyz Republic, Madagascar, the Philippines, Rwanda, Tajikistan, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Yemen**. Participants represented government ministries, implementing agencies, World Bank operational teams, and technical institutions. They brought together experience from different institutional systems, climate contexts, and stages of project implementation.



The table below provides a snapshot of activities participant countries are implementing that contribute to locally led climate action.

AFRICA

Angola's project, [*Enhancing the Social Protection System for Human Capital and Resilience*](#), aims to increase access to opportunities that build foundational human capital and household resilience and strengthen the social protection system. It includes mechanisms for rapid and adaptive responses to emergencies, including climate-related risks.

Burundi's [*Merankabandi Productive Social Safety Nets and Cash-for-Jobs*](#) project strengthens social protection, productive inclusion, employment, and emergency response. The project supports households affected by floods, water shortages, and food insecurity through cash transfers and agricultural inputs, complemented by hygiene, nutrition, financial literacy, savings, and income-generating activities. It also promotes community resilience through locally relevant and shock-responsive interventions.

Alongside *Merankabandi*, the [*Turikumwe Integrated Community Development Project*](#) aims to improve nutrition, access to basic services, and economic opportunities. It finances socioeconomic infrastructure, agricultural and non-agricultural activities, food security, nutrition, and support for microenterprises and cooperatives. *Turikumwe* prioritizes community-driven development and promotes inclusion, social cohesion, and resilience to shocks.

Cameroon's [*Projet de Gouvernance Locale et Communautés Résilientes*](#) (PROLOG) operates across six of the country's ten administrative regions, covering approximately 12 million people in 187 communes selected on the basis of fragility, conflict, and violence classifications. The project aims to improve access to resilient community infrastructure and build the capacity of community leaders and regional and local authorities. It also provides funding to these authorities for resilient infrastructure based on climate risk assessments and supports the integration of climate considerations into public investment.

The **Central African Republic's** [*Projet de Gouvernance Locale et Communautés Résilientes*](#) aims to strengthen local capacity to deliver services, improve access to climate-smart socioeconomic infrastructure, and provide socioeconomic support for the reintegration of ex-combatants through public works. It covers 22 communes in four of the country's prefectures.

Kenya's [*Financing Locally Led Climate Action Program*](#) (FLLoCA) empowers county governments and communities to plan, finance, implement, and monitor context-specific climate actions while strengthening the institutional, technical, and financial systems needed to sustain resilience. It aims to build institutional capacity, engage citizens, and channel devolved climate finance toward local investments in water, food security, and climate-resilient infrastructure. It supports a national-scale model of decentralized adaptation by strengthening institutional and regulatory frameworks and financing climate actions with performance-based grants directly through counties.

Madagascar's [*Support for Resilient Livelihoods in the South of Madagascar*](#) (MIONJO) project aims to improve access to basic infrastructure, strengthen local governance, and address the food security crisis through a community-led development approach. Key governance activities include supporting communities in developing inclusive, integrated plans that address climate issues and applying a locally led adaptation approach.

Rwanda's [*Social Protection Transformation Project*](#) (SPTP) increases access to jobs, human capital, and social protection for poor and vulnerable people. It delivers cash transfers, nutrition support, climate-smart public works, economic inclusion and graduation packages, and links to jobs for beneficiaries able to work. Climate resilience is embedded through adaptive shock-response mechanisms and the Imibereho dynamic social registry.

Uganda's [*Northern Uganda Social Action Fund IV*](#) (NUSAF IV) aims to support sustainable livelihoods, enhance poor and vulnerable households' resilience to shocks, and strengthen adaptive social protection systems. Key activities include collecting scientific and "ground-truth" data and drafting and validating a scalability report. Once authorized, the project can expand household coverage and provide eligible households with funds to prepare for shocks.

CENTRAL ASIA

The Kyrgyz Republic's [*National Community Initiatives Project*](#) (NCIP) strengthens the ability of target communities and local governments to assess needs and provide climate-resilient socioeconomic infrastructure and economic opportunities, especially for women and youth. Communities identify and prioritize their needs, including those related to climate risks. Climate considerations are integrated into awareness-raising activities, local development plans, investment identification, and livelihood interventions.

Tajikistan's [*Socio-Economic Resilience Strengthening Project*](#) (SERSP) aims to strengthen participatory local governance, improve the quality of local infrastructure, and increase livelihood opportunities. The project supports climate-smart investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy. It also expands livelihood opportunities, especially for

women and youth, including through grants for climate-resilient jobs and small and medium-sized enterprises.

The second phase of **Uzbekistan's** [*Rural Infrastructure Development Project*](#) (RIDP) aims to finance community-prioritized investments in internal roads, water supply, electricity, schools, and health facilities. Implementation follows a community-driven approach that ensures local participation in planning and monitoring. Climate risk considerations and solutions are integrated to enhance resilience, especially to drought, water shortages, and flooding, including through drip irrigation systems, canal rehabilitation, and drought-resistant crop varieties.

EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Indonesia's 75,269 villages cover 91 percent of the country's land area and are home to 120 million people, making village resilience central to climate adaptation. The country's *Kolaborasi Aksi Desa Berketahanan Iklim Climate Resilience Development Program* strengthens collaboration among ministries, local governments, and villages to plan, finance, implement, and monitor village climate action. Results include mapping 8,877 high-risk villages; issuing Village Fund allocation guidance; establishing an interagency task force; preparing technical guidelines for villages; developing LMS-based training for facilitators; and improving climate spending monitoring.

The Philippines' *Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services* (KALAHI-CIDSS) program has institutionalized community-driven development at national scale, enabling communities to plan and implement resilient local infrastructure and services with extensive volunteer engagement and paid community labor. Building on this platform, [*the Philippine Community Resilience Project*](#) (PCRP) applies the same CDD modalities to strengthen community capacity for participatory resilience planning and increase access to resilience investments. Communities assess risks, prepare and implement projects, and manage resources. The project promotes locally led climate resilience through risk-informed climate-smart planning, community decision-making, and stronger collaboration between communities and local governments.

EUROPE

Shoulder-to-Shoulder is **Ukraine's** national horizontal intermunicipal solidarity initiative, which helps address one of Europe's largest ecological catastrophes. More than 1,170 communities have established over 1,135 partnerships and are implementing 400 joint projects focused on restoring social infrastructure, delivering social services, and accommodating internally displaced people.

4. Day 1: Setting the Scene

The opening half-day helped participants develop a shared understanding of **how locally led climate action can move from climate information to locally owned decisions, investments, and implementation.** Discussions highlighted the interconnected nature of climate risk, livelihoods, service delivery, infrastructure, and institutions, and underscored the importance of empowering local actors to shape solutions that reflect their specific needs and circumstances.

Participants explored the conditions needed to translate climate information into effective local action. Panel discussions emphasized the importance of understanding how climate risks affect communities differently, aligning national policies and frameworks with local planning processes, and strengthening decentralized systems and local governments. Practitioners also examined the role of sustainable and predictable financing, as well as collaboration among governments, communities, the private sector, and other stakeholders, in supporting long-term resilience.



Examples from Austria, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Philippines illustrated how climate data can be translated into practical choices that communities and local institutions can use. These experiences demonstrated that information alone is insufficient. Sustained engagement, dedicated local coordination, and institutional support are needed to help stakeholders interpret information, mobilize

expertise, maintain momentum, and integrate adaptation into routine decision-making. The discussions highlighted that when local actors have meaningful decision-making authority, usable information, resources, and support systems, they are better positioned to plan and sustain climate-resilient investments.

The session highlighted the value of bringing social policy practitioners into closer dialogue with climate and disaster risk specialists. Speakers underscored the importance of community engagement, local ownership, and place-based approaches, reinforcing the broader message that effective climate action depends on strong local institutions, cross-sector coordination, and partnerships that connect national frameworks with local priorities.

Practitioner learning outcomes: Participants developed a shared understanding of locally led climate action; recognized the links among climate risk, livelihoods, services, infrastructure, and institutions; and identified local ownership, cross-sector coordination, and sustainable financing as foundations for effective action.





5. Day 2: Structured Learning and Peer Exchange

Day 2 strengthened participants' capacity to frame climate information needs around concrete decisions and to apply practical approaches for climate risk assessment. Throughout the day, discussions emphasized that effective climate adaptation begins not with the volume of available data, but with a clear understanding of the decisions that need to be made and the risks those decisions are intended to address.

Participants explored how climate risks emerge through the interaction of hazards with exposure, vulnerability, adaptive capacity, infrastructure, institutions, and livelihoods. Sessions highlighted the importance of selecting and combining different sources of information, including historical observations, forecasts, projections, vulnerability data, and local knowledge, according to the planning horizon and decision context. This reinforced the principle that climate information must be fit for purpose rather than comprehensive for its own sake.

The discussions further strengthened participants' understanding of climate services and the role of translating technical information into actionable insights. Practitioners examined how effective climate services begin by engaging stakeholders, identifying the decisions they face, and tailoring information to their needs and context. Sessions introduced a practical four-step climate risk assessment methodology: defining the scope, developing impact chains, analyzing hazards and vulnerabilities using both scientific and local evidence, and evaluating which risks exceed acceptable thresholds and warrant action. An example from an Austrian energy utility illustrated the operational realities of integrating climate risk assessments into asset management and implementation decisions.

Country experiences from Kenya and Madagascar demonstrated how climate risk assessments can be conducted through participatory processes that place communities at the center of analysis and decision-making. These examples showed that assessing risks with communities rather than for them helps identify differentiated vulnerabilities, strengthen local capacity, and create stronger links between risk diagnostics, climate action plans, and investments. The country

carousel broadened this learning by enabling participants to compare approaches across contexts and sectors, identify common challenges, and reflect on which tools and methods could be adapted to their own institutional environments.



Practitioner learning outcomes: Participants strengthened their capacity to frame information needs around concrete decisions; distinguish hazards from risks; build impact chains; integrate local and scientific knowledge; tailor assessment depth to available data and resources; and connect participatory diagnostics to plans, budgets, and implementation.

6. Day 3: Applying Knowledge Through Action

Day 3 focused on strengthening participants' ability to translate climate risk information into practical decisions that account for competing priorities, institutional constraints, and implementation realities. Building on the conceptual foundations and methodological tools introduced during the first two days, participants practiced applying climate information in realistic decision-making contexts where uncertainty, resource limitations, and differing stakeholder interests must all be considered.

The multi-hazard simulation exercise led by GeoSphere Austria enabled participants to work through climate-related planning challenges from multiple stakeholder perspectives. The simulation emphasized that hazard events rarely happen in isolation; rather, they interact, amplify one another, and cascade across sectors. Assuming different institutional roles, participants examined how priorities can diverge across actors and explored how risk information can be used to negotiate trade-offs, identify feasible options, and support collective decision-making. The exercise reinforced that effective adaptation planning requires not only technical analysis, but also collaboration, communication, and an understanding of the institutional environment in which decisions are made.



The afternoon project clinics helped participants connect these concepts directly to their own operational challenges. Through discussions with GeoSphere experts, teams tested how principles introduced throughout the program, including decision-led information, proportional analysis, stakeholder engagement, and the use of future climate scenarios, could be applied in their respective contexts. These exchanges demonstrated that useful climate risk assessments do not always depend on sophisticated or costly data systems. Local observations, accessible technologies, and well-structured stakeholder dialogue can often provide valuable insights that improve planning and decision-making.



Together, the simulation exercise, project clinics, and an evening excursion highlighted the importance of moving beyond technical diagnosis toward action-oriented problem-solving. Participants reflected on how to adapt methods and tools to their own institutional settings, identify realistic next steps, and bridge the gap between climate information and implementation. During a guided walking tour of Vienna's Superblock Favoriten, participants observed how participatory urban planning has shaped "Cool Streets" that help protect residents from extreme heat. The visit provided a practical example of how community-level planning can translate climate risk information into locally responsive action.

Practitioner learning outcomes: Participants practiced interpreting information through multiple stakeholder perspectives, negotiating priorities under uncertainty, identifying feasible next steps, and translating technical concepts into decisions that account for institutional and implementation realities.

7. Day 4: Field Visits—Seeing Locally Led Climate Action in Practice

Day 4 enabled participants to connect the concepts, methods, and decision-making approaches explored throughout the program to real-world initiatives addressing climate risks at the local level. Through field visits across the water, energy, circular economy, and agriculture sectors, participants examined how climate resilience is put into practice and reflected on the technical, institutional, and social factors that influence long-term success.

Across the visits, a common theme emerged: effective climate action depends not only on technical solutions, but also on the institutions, relationships, and incentives that sustain them over time. Participants observed how local ownership, stakeholder engagement, governance arrangements, and economic benefits can shape whether climate-resilient interventions are maintained, adapted, and scaled.

The visit to the **Marchfeld Canal Operating Company** illustrated how resilient water infrastructure requires continuous coordination among actors with competing needs and priorities. Participants explored the challenges of water allocation, stakeholder communication, and long-term resource management, highlighting the importance of trusted institutions, transparent rules, and sustained dialogue in supporting adaptation outcomes.



At the **Repair & Service Center R.U.S.Z.**, participants examined how circular-economy initiatives can generate environmental, social, and economic benefits simultaneously. The enterprise demonstrated this integrated approach by extending the lifespan of thousands of appliances each year while providing skills development and transitional employment opportunities for marginalized groups. The visit showed how local climate action can reduce resource consumption, create jobs, strengthen employability, and support more inclusive forms of economic development.

The **Renewable Energy Community Tattendorf** provided an example of how communities can actively participate in the energy transition through collective ownership and governance. Participants saw how residents can organize around locally appropriate renewable energy solutions, including a low-impact mini-hydro turbine designed to maintain fish passage. The visit illustrated how local investment, benefit-sharing arrangements, and citizen engagement can support renewable energy deployment while strengthening community ownership of climate action.

The **Forestgarden Community Supported Agriculture initiative** highlighted how climate-smart land management can integrate ecological resilience with local livelihoods and food production. Discussions focused on the ways community participation, productive landscapes, and long-term stewardship can reinforce one another, creating systems that deliver environmental and social benefits over time.



The field visits allowed participants to compare different pathways for locally led climate action and to observe how technical measures interact with institutional capacity, community engagement, economic incentives, and governance structures. The experience reinforced the broader lesson that resilience is built not only through infrastructure and investments, but also through the relationships, skills, and ownership arrangements that support durable implementation.



8. Reflection, Synthesis, and Closing

The closing session focused on helping participants consolidate their learning and identify how the concepts, tools, and experiences from the program could be applied in their own operational contexts. Drawing on both the technical sessions and field visits, participants reflected on how locally led climate action can be translated into practical approaches that respond to the institutional, financial, and social realities of climate adaptation.

Discussions highlighted several principles that had emerged consistently throughout the program: the importance of generating climate information that is relevant to local decisions; building trusted institutions that can convene stakeholders and sustain action over time; fostering local ownership and participation; securing adequate financing and maintenance arrangements; and ensuring that resilience investments generate tangible benefits for communities and livelihoods. Participants considered how these principles manifested across the different case studies and field sites and explored how they could be adapted to the governance structures, capacities, and challenges of their own countries and projects.

The session also provided an opportunity for participants to compare experiences and lessons across sectors and regions, identifying both shared challenges and opportunities for application. These exchanges reinforced the value of peer learning and demonstrated how approaches tested in one context can inform adaptation efforts elsewhere when appropriately adapted to local circumstances.

By the conclusion of the program, participants had connected conceptual frameworks, analytical methods, practical exercises, and field-based observations into a coherent understanding of locally led climate action. The closing discussion encouraged teams to move beyond learning toward implementation, while strengthening the professional relationships and networks that can support continued collaboration, problem-solving, and knowledge exchange.

Practitioner learning outcomes: *Participants synthesized technical and experiential learning, identified possible applications in their projects, and strengthened relationships with peers and technical partners who can support continued implementation and exchange.*



9. Participant Evaluations and Next Steps

The post-event evaluation survey results indicate that participants found the Vienna Practitioners' Program highly relevant, engaging, and useful. Among the 52 respondents, 98.1 percent reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the program, while more than 90 percent agreed that the workshop topics were relevant to their work, the sessions were well prepared, the experts were effective, and the program fostered professional exchange and peer learning. Participants particularly valued the field visits, hands-on exercises, country experience sharing, and sessions on climate data and climate risk assessment. Many respondents highlighted practical lessons on translating climate data into action, integrating local knowledge and community participation into resilience planning, and applying climate risk considerations throughout the project cycle. The survey also suggests a strong appetite for continued engagement, with 96.2 percent of respondents expressing interest in follow-up events, particularly on topics related to climate data, climate risk assessment, community-level resilience, and monitoring and evaluation.

As the latest step in a continuing learning journey on locally led climate action, the Vienna Practitioners' Program deepened participants' technical knowledge while expanding the networks that can support continued exchange and application. Sustaining these gains will require a recurring practitioner offering that combines targeted technical support, continued peer exchange, accessible practical resources, and follow-up to track how participants apply learning in their operations.

Recommended next steps emerging from the participant evaluations for further strengthening the learning agenda include:

- **Institutionalizing the practitioner offering.** The program should be institutionalized as a recurring offering under the World Bank Group Academy, retaining the partnership with the Vienna Development Knowledge Center and GeoSphere Austria to provide implementation-focused learning for the growing community of practice on social policy and climate change. Future offerings can continue to include live operational challenges, mixed-country cohorts, applied exercises, and access to technical experts.
- **Strengthening the practitioner community.** Peer clinics, thematic cohorts, and country-to-country connections can sustain exchange between formal events. These would allow teams to share tools, implementation challenges, and early results rather than wait for fully documented success stories.
- **Building an accessible knowledge infrastructure.** K360 (for World Bank teams) or the World Bank's external [platform on Locally Led Climate Action](#) can provide a one stop shop for resources, including terms of reference, participatory tools, project design examples, assessment templates, facilitation materials, and field cases. The platform can organize these resources around practitioner decisions and delivery problems rather than technical topics alone.