



The Organizational Learning and Transformative Adaptation Prototype Game

OVERVIEW AND FACILITATION GUIDE

Background and Purpose

Accelerating Climate Adaptation via Meso-level Integration (ACAMI) is a collaborative initiative that focuses on strengthening the **strategic positioning, learning, and capacity of meso-level organizations (MLOs)** working in climate adaptation and social transformation.

MLOs act as crucial intermediaries between grassroots communities and national or global actors such as funders, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and policymakers. They translate broad adaptation goals into context-specific actions while also communicating local realities upward to influence funding and policy.

However, MLOs often operate within complex systems marked by:

- Competing pressures from funders and partners;
- Limited internal capacity; and
- Tension between mission-driven goals and externally imposed priorities.

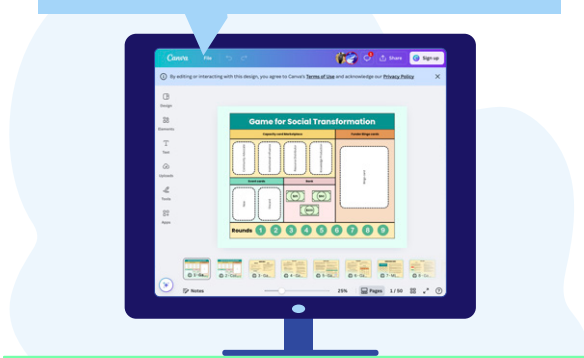
The ACAMI initiative explored these dynamics and **supports MLOs through tools, research, and co-designed strategies**. The **ACAMI Organizational Learning and Transformative Adaptation (OLATA) Game** is one such tool, a prototype role playing game that engages players in understanding, negotiating, and reflecting on the real-world dilemmas MLOs encounter. It is both a simulation and a conversation starter, offering a space for **strategic learning, organizational reflection, and systems thinking**.

The interactive social learning game aims to help climate adaptation-oriented organizations reflect on their attributes, collaborations, and strategies for transformative adaptation. The social learning game aims to help organizations critically assess their role in adaptation efforts and explore strategies for more effective, long-term impact.

NOTE ON PROTOTYPE STATUS

This is a **living prototype**. Feedback from workshops, classrooms, and field use will be used to improve mechanics, realism, and relevance. The ultimate goal is to create a **robust and dynamic tool** that mirrors the strategic environments of MLOs and empowers both practitioners and funders to learn through play. We welcome your feedback and insights!

Access the game materials from Canva to download and print
https://www.canva.com/design/DAGr0iM_YIY/a4kHUSIXhveOXsiDedMtow/edit



Overview

This game introduces players to the strategic tensions faced by MLOs working on climate adaptation and social transformation. Players must balance funder goals with their organization's transformation mission.



Learning outcomes: Players will learn to navigate tensions between funder goals and transformation missions, providing an opportunity for self-reflection on MLO collaboration and resource allocation to achieve competing priorities. The game offers opportunities to:

- 1 **Navigate trade-offs** between funder goals and the MLO's transformative mission.
- 2 **Understand opportunities to achieve their transformation mission** within their capacities.
- 3 **Practice negotiation, trust-building, and coordination** through collaboration and partnerships.
- 4 **Adapt to and manage uncertainty** in international development projects through "Event cards".
- 5 **Consider how to build organizational capacities** through partnerships.



Players: 4-6

GETTING STARTED

Materials Checklist

- ✓ Game board
- ✓ Capacity cards
- ✓ Event cards
- ✓ Funder Bingo cards
- ✓ MLO role cards
- ✓ Cash tokens
- ✓ Player scorecards
- ✓ Items to mark Funder Bingo Card progress (e.g., beans, stones, etc.)

EXAMPLES OF MLO ROLE CARD

Agriculture Radio
Local NPO/CBO

For twenty years, Radio Trust has helped disseminate key weather, climate, and agriculture production information to small-scale producers.

Scale: Local

Budget: 25

Starting Capacity: 2

Your Transformation Mission
Your goal is to **Deepscale** by improving access to information amongst your radio audience.

Womens Coop
Social Enterprise

Womens Coop is a social enterprise whose mission is to improve the lives of women farmers through technical assistance and business management.

Scale: National

Budget: 250

Starting Capacity: 2

Your Transformation Mission
Your goal is to **Upscale** to build government support of women farmers and improve the regulatory environment.

EXAMPLE OF FUNDER BINGO CARD

Gender Equity in Agriculture
Promote gender equity and climate resilience.

Goal: Complete the entire card
Reward: \$500 upon completion

GAME BOARD

Game for Social Transformation

Capacity card Marketplace

Community Advocate

Institutional Influence

Resource Distributor

Knowledge Production

Event cards

New

Discard

Bank

\$25

\$50

\$100

Funder Bingo cards

Bingo card

Rounds 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

PLAYER SCORE CARD

Category	Player 1	Player 2	Player 3	Player 4	Player 5	Player 6
Completed Funder Bingo card (+1 point per card)						
Transformation Mission completed (based on player role card) ◦ 5+ cards (single suit) of your role card's transformation mission = Mission Fulfilled (+3 points) ◦ 3-4 cards of a suit = Partial Progress (+1 point) ◦ Fewer than 3 = Not Achieved (0 points)						
All 4 suits bonus (collect one of each Capacity suit) (+1 point)						
Cash remaining (\$100 = 1 point)						
TOTAL Points						

Setup Steps

Shuffle all decks:
Capacity, Event, and Funder Bingo cards

Distribute to each player:

A 1 MLO card

B Starting Capacity cards and budget (per MLO card)

C 1 Funder Bingo card

Provide 1 Scorecard per group

Place Event and Capacity decks on the board

Explain the two goals:

A Complete your Funder Bingo card

B Fulfil your MLO's transformation mission

Ask each player to read their MLO card aloud

How to Play

Each player takes a turn in this sequence:

- 1) Draw a capacity card or take \$100
 - 2) Decide whether to deploy, trade, acquire capacities or to engage in partnerships
 - 3) Draw and resolve an Event card
- Game ends after 9 rounds or completing 2 Funder Bingo Cards
- Players are scored by the number of Funder Bingo Cards completed and whether Capacity Cards held enable completion of Transformative Mission. Use the scorecard to tally points. The player with the highest score wins.

Transformation Mission:

- 5+ capacity matches = +3 pts
- 3-4 capacity matches = +1 pt
- < 3 capacity matches = 0 pts

All 4 Capacity Suits = +1 pt

Partnerships

- Cost: \$200 (split optional)
- Max 3 players per partnership
- Minimum duration: 2 full turns
- Share Capacity cards to fulfil one Funder card at a time
- Funder Bingo rewards must be split by agreement
- MLO transformation missions are scored individually

TYPES OF CAPACITY CARDS

Each MLO has a Transformation Mission that is achieved by gaining associated capacities.

Suit	Capacity	Transformation
	Institutional Influence: Shaping policies, systems, and institutional support	Upscaling
	Community Advocate: Creating change within local communities through the adoption of new practices or behaviors	Deepscaling
	Knowledge Production: Creating and spreading knowledge, tools, or models	Wildcard
	Resource Distributor: Supports operations and logistics (e.g., transportation, administration, finance)	Outscaling

EXAMPLES OF CATALYST CARDS

Catalyst cards provide beneficial boosts, such as drawing extra Capacity cards or gaining cash.

New Food Hub Launched! A new food hub in the region improves and expands market access. Gain one Resource Distributor Capacity card.	New Heat Tolerant Variety! Adoption of a new heat-tolerant crop variety has increased yields and improved producer profits. Gain one Resource Distributor Capacity card.
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EXAMPLES OF HAZARD CARDS

Hazard cards present setbacks or obstacles. They may require players to lose Capacity cards, spend money, or pause progress.

Sponsor Micro-Management! The sponsor announces that all new and existing projects must increase their reporting frequency. Pay \$100 to devote additional staff time.	Funding Freeze! One of your existing sponsors freezes funding for the quarter. Lose \$100.
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EXAMPLES OF DECISION CARDS

Decision cards pose ethical or strategic dilemmas. Players must choose between two outcomes, balancing funder goals with their personal transformation mission.

Extreme Weather Event Extreme weather has impacted your community. Do you: 1. Emergency relief: Lose \$100 but gain 1 Community Advocate card. 2. Maintain your current project, but lose 1 Community Advocate Capacity Card.	Gender Exclusion The local council will not partner with you if women are included. Do you: 1. Exclude women: Gain 2 Community Advocate cards, lose 1 Institutional Influence card. 2. Decline: Gain 1 Institutional Influence and 1 Knowledge Producer card, lose \$100.
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FACILITATION TIPS

- Encourage reflection on real-world trade-offs in decision cards.
- Use MLO stories for deeper roleplay.
- Wildcards (e.g., Knowledge Production) help both goals.

DEBRIEFING PROMPTS

After gameplay, initiate group reflection using these questions:

- How did the game make you reflect on your **organization's mission and strategy**?
- What insights emerged around **trade-offs** between transformation and funder alignment?
- How did **partnerships** influence your strategy and outcomes?
- Did the ethical dilemmas feel realistic?

Opportunities for Future Use

This role-playing game prototype can be leveraged in various contexts:



Education / Classroom Use

- Integrate into social innovation, development studies, or public policy curricula.
- Facilitate discussions around nonprofit management and impact measurement.



MLO Workshops

- Use as a tool for self-reflection during retreats or training sessions.
- Aid staff in understanding capacity trade-offs and funding dynamics.



Macro-Level Actor Orientation

- Help funders, foundations, and policy actors understand the realities MLOs face.

- Employ in program launch and team building meetings with implementation partners.
- Promote empathy and more effective funding strategies.



Professional Development and Advanced Learning

- Future iterations may serve as modules in:
 - Strategic management courses;
 - Training programs for funders and intermediaries; and
 - Leadership development for MLOs.

As a prototype, this game will be evolving in response to feedback from players! Go to the [CANVA link](#) for the latest iteration.



Please provide any feedback here

About ACAMI

The Accelerating Climate Adaptation via Meso-level Integration (ACAMI) project was a two-year collaborative initiative focused on enhancing the role of meso-level organizations—public, private, and non-profit entities that act as intermediaries between small-scale agricultural producers and broader policy and investment communities—in advancing effective climate change adaptation strategies across Africa. ACAMI identified leverage points and bottlenecks affecting the capacity of these organizations to facilitate equitable and effective adaptation for small-scale producers. By co-creating tools and metrics that capture the attributes and strategies of meso-level organizations, the project supports partnership opportunities and improves risk management and sustainable livelihoods under climate change. The project was conducted in four African countries: Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and South Africa.

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For more detailed information, please contact the ACAMI project leads for access to academic publications and working papers.

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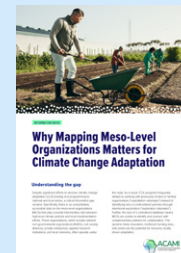
KNOWLEDGE SERIES



Framework for Conceptualizing MLO Dynamics



MLO Self Assessment Tool



Mapping MLO Attributes and Diversity



MLO Landscape Across Four Countries



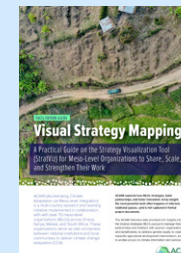
Guidance on Engaging with MLOs



MLO Innovations for Gender Equity



MLO Roles in Climate Information Services



A Practical Guide on Strategy Visualization Tool for MLOs to Share, Scale, and Strengthen Their Work



What's your Strategy? Organizational Learning Game (Prototype)

Available here:



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