

The 2015 Third Resilience Academy focused on Enhancing Resilience to Minimize Loss and Damage: Providing Knowledge for the UNFCCC

The third Resilience Academy (RA) was held in September 2015 at CCDB Hope Foundation, an environment friendly 'earth blocks' establishment in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The new batch of RA2015 participants, who will also come together at RA2016 in Germany, consisted of a broad mix of researchers and practitioners from over twenty countries.

The Resilience Academy is an annual event that began in 2013, organized by the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS), Munich Re Foundation (MRF) and the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD). The first Resilience Academy focused on livelihood resilience and explored different issues related to resilience. Following that, the next Resilience Academy in 2014 dug into abrupt changes of



livelihoods, transformations and transitions in people's lives. The most recent Resilience Academy was centered on addressing Loss and Damage to provide knowledge for policymakers in the UNFCCC proceedings in 2015 and 2016. Gibika (research to action) project has entered into its action phase and is presently seeking collaboration with local implementers in Bangladesh. Following this trajectory, The Resilience Academy took a turn towards more participants being practitioners. During the academy, Gibika team has presented their research findings and challenges they faced during their field research.



"Framing the post-2015 development agenda as a collective means to build resilience to climate change and avoid loss and damage and address loss and damage that is not avoided through enhanced comprehensive risk management is one way to align the implementation of these three agendas."

Erin Roberts et al. 2015 (King's College London)

Resilience synergies in the post-2015 development agenda in Nature Climate Change (Opinion & Comment).

Weblink: <http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/v5/n12/full/nclimate2776.html#access>

Resilience Academy 2015: A versatile combination of researchers and practitioners

This batch of RA participants featured a versatile combination of researchers and practitioners, whereby both groups attempted to minimize the gaps between



research and action. The consensus was to ensure successful action backed by scientific research. Researchers emphasized that losses and damages are emerging issues in the face of climate change and it is



crucial that actions are taken in this regard, while the practitioners paid more attention towards identifying a direct linkage between research and action. Generally, research recommendations are aimed to influence policy makers to incur change at the community level. However the practitioners argued that this process is highly time consuming and in some cases, these recommendations never get executed at the community level. So the argument from the practitioner's side was to make research findings or recommendations available directly to the practitioners so that they can find effective ways of using them.

Loss and Damage: Towards a better understanding of climate change impacts

Loss and damage is a concept which gives a better understanding of climate change impacts and promotes more effective adaptation strategies for vulnerable people. At COP19 in November 2013, the "Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts" was





established to address loss and damage incurred by climate change. Loss and Damage occurs when the impacts of climate related stressors cannot be avoided through adaptation or mitigation measures. Loss and Damage can either be a result of a sudden disaster (cyclone and flood), or a slow onset event (sea level rise) and includes both economic and non-economic aspects. Loss and Damage can refer to economic losses and damages but losses and damages of things which cannot be traded on a market are labeled as non-economic loss and damage. (Morrissety and Oliver-Smith, 2013).

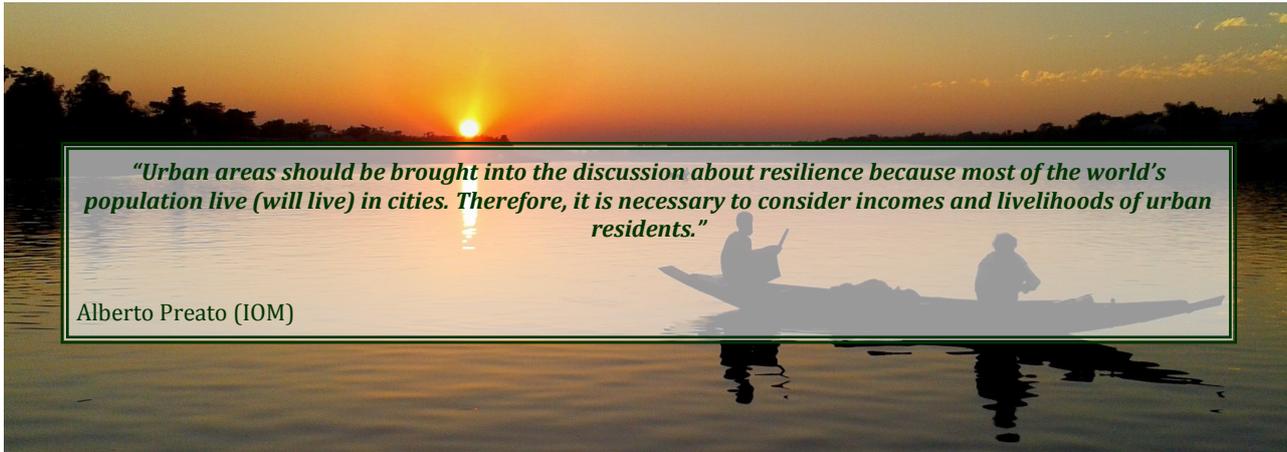


should be set at 2° Celsius or less. The vulnerable countries argued that 2° Celsius is still unfavorable enough to pose an existential threat. Now COP21 in Paris has reached an agreement to limit the global temperature rise to below 2° Celsius, a decision in which the climate vulnerable countries had a significant role to play. The LDC group proposed a 1.5° Celsius limit or less, the loss and damage concept helped to provide an argument to this discussion. At COP22 in Marrakesh, the



Considering its economic and non-economic importance, loss and damage became a significant topic in climate change negotiations, but is emerging in other fields such as research and policy-making. 2015 was an important year, as the whole world was hoping to have an agreement at COP21 in Paris. An important discussion occurred on whether the mitigation goal





Mechanism of loss and damage will be evaluated including its structure, mandate and effectiveness in 2016. Since issues like adaptation and loss and damage are still under negotiation in the UNFCCC, RA15 aimed to provide empirical knowledge to further the discussion and progress during post 2015 negotiations. The countries that are going to face the hardest climate impacts without contributing high carbon emissions are in need of recognition for their losses and damages and need better negotiations in their favor to minimize the impact.

Storytelling and alternative ways to communicate research outputs

During RA15, Sonja Ayeb-Karlsson and Laurens Nijzink held a workshop on storytelling, exploring how it can more effectively communicate findings to both the



research community as well as general audiences. It is an alternative way of communicating research findings, by using photographs, sounds, videos and other forms of media. Researchers decisively chose the content of

the stories according to the context and objective of their research. There are different methods of storytelling such as photo films, short video documentaries, life histories, livelihood history etc.



Gibika team has applied storytelling methodology in their research and are currently producing photo films as an output of the Livelihood Histories (LH). The research team conducted 28 Livelihood Histories, in-depth interviews focusing on livelihood changes, and recorded audio, photographs and videos as inputs for individual photo films. Seven photo films (one per study site) are currently being produced. The films will be published online with the aim to reach a broader audience than journal articles and scientific publications might have done. During the Resilience Academy, a workshop on how to produce photo films was organized which included a screening of the existing Gibika photo film drafts. This session was also an opportunity to have feedback from the participants on drafted photo films.

"While there are tremendous economic losses due to climatic stress which need to be compensated financially, there are also losses that money cannot buy back, such as loss of identity, place, health, cultural heritage or biodiversity."

Sonja Ayeb-Karlsson (UNU-EHS)

UNU article, *What money cannot buy back: non-economic loss and damage.*

Weblink: <http://ehs.unu.edu/blog/articles/what-money-cannot-buy-back-non-economic-loss-and-damage.html>

Meet the RA2015/2016 participants:

Ava Mulla is the co-founder and CEO of Building Pioneers, a social business start-up from Germany that aims to bring compressed stabilized earth blocks (CSEB) to the market in Bangladesh. CSEB are an eco-friendly and low-cost alternative to fired clay bricks that allow



earthquake resistant construction and can be produced by unskilled labour. Ava is running a pilot project on CSEB production and house construction in Shariatpur, south of Dhaka in cooperation with a local partner organization.

Previously Ava was a partner in a German-American start-up that promoted prefabricated sandwich panels for affordable housing and worked for the world-market leader in laser-sintering technology. Building Pioneers were among the winners of the 2016 Google Impact Challenge and was awarded €10,000 after getting over 700,000 votes while competing against 210 other projects.

Meet the RA2015/2016 participants:

Md. Hafijul Islam Khan is an Environmental lawyer, working for the last 13 years on legal issues related to environment, natural resource management, and climate change.



He is currently leading an organization called

Centre for Climate Justice-Bangladesh (CCJ-B) and also works with ICCAD as a member of Loss and Damage working group. Mr. Khan is a climate negotiator working closely with the LDC climate negotiator group as a Core Team Member, on loss and damage associated with climate change. He is a member of IUCN-World Commission on Environmental Law and has been a consultant for several international organizations. He completed his LL.B and LL.M from University of Dhaka and the second LLM obtained from Central European University.

“Ecosystem-based adaptation uses a strategy that recognizes and integrates biodiversity and ecosystems services. The underlying principle is that healthy ecosystems can play a vital role in maintaining and increasing resilience to climate change and in reducing climate-related risk and vulnerability.”

Amy Quandt (University of Colorado, USA)

Meet the RA2015/2016 participants:

Emily Boyd is a social scientist specializing in climate change, development and resilience. She has a PhD in Development Studies from the University of East Anglia. She was a James Martin/Leverhulme Fellow at Oxford University (2006-2009) and a lecturer and Deputy Director, Global Development Centre, University of Leeds (2009-2011). Emily Boyd was appointed Professor in Resilience Geography at Reading in 2013. She is currently a Steering Board member of the Governmental Strategic Research Programme at Stockholm University Ekoklim and Resilience Programme leader at the Centre for Food Security (CFS). She is also on the Editorial board of Climate Risk Management and Editorial Associate Journal of Ecology and Society. Emily has been a reviewer for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) FAR WGII and is a Guest Editor for Antipode, Geographical Journal and Development Policy Review.



Meet the RA2015/2016 participants:

Denis Opiyo Opondo is a PhD candidate, social development specialist and climate change researcher who teaches sociology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Maseno University.

Opondo has conducted studies on coping and adaptation to climate change in Kenya, and was PI in two studies on ‘Loss and Damage from flooding in Budalangi District, Western Kenya’ and ‘Household And Community Experiences and Perceptions on Climate Change Impacts due to Floods, and Expectations on Policy’ in Bunyala Sub-County, Western Kenya. At present, Opondo is coordinating a Flood Disaster Risk Reduction project at Maseno University sponsored by ClimDev-Africa Special Fund (CDSF) of the African Development Bank. He is also a member of “Adaptation Fund Network” and “Loss and Damage” forum. He has published a journal article called ‘Erosive coping after the 2011 floods in Kenya’.



When asked about what made them want to stay in their village eyes lit up. The previously subdued dialog became energized. They love the air in the village, being able to catch fish, and to live in a place where their parents and grandparents live. Where generations past have been born, grew up, and died.

Erin Derrington (Eco-MD)

NELD story, Eastern Bangladesh – “Ask the decision makers to help... we want to stay here.”

Weblink: <http://climate-neld.com/neld-story-by-erin-derrington/>

2015 field trip to Singpur, Kishorgonj, environmentally vulnerable by riverbank erosion and flood

On the third day of RA15, all the participants visited Singpur, where participants were divided into seven groups with a balanced mix of researchers and practitioners in each group. Singpur in Kishorgonj district, is one of the flood prone sites selected by



Gibika in 2013 and with almost 5000 households, Singpur is also severely threatened by riverbank erosion. Agriculture is the dominant means of livelihood, but during monsoon the entire village depends on fishing. This field trip provided the participants with an opportunity to better understand what loss and damage and livelihood resilience mean to this community. Participants awoke bright and early to catch their long bus ride followed by a boat ride to



reach their site. Before the day of the field trip, participants prepared a tentative questionnaire investigating the impacts of climate change, loss and damage and other related issues within the community. Once participants arrived at the site, the different groups were split up at different parts of the village each with a translator who had local knowledge of the





area. Each group had the opportunity to spend time with community members who's lives and livelihoods has been impacted by climate change. A major issue that arose from the discussions had to do with



riverbank erosion. The village is protected at the west side by a flood protection wall but on the other side of the village, riverbank erosion is eating up the land. Several villagers had already migrated to nearby cities.



Meet the RA'15 organizers:

Sonja Ayeb-Karlsson joined UNU-EHS in 2013 where she currently manages the Gibika research to action project. She has spent the last couple of years based in Bangladesh, working closely with the communities in the seven Gibika study sites. Her main



research focus has been the personal Livelihood History methodology and the development of story telling approaches to interact with communities' facing environmental stress. She is also exploring alternative ways to communicate research findings through mediums of photography, visual communication and photo films. In 2015 her PhD proposal based on the work in Bangladesh was accepted at University of Sussex (US) and Institute of Development Studies (IDS). Her PhD research focus is on decision-making in relation to environmental stress in Bangladesh, with central attention on disaster evacuation decisions and non-economic loss and damage.

"The loss and damage process is often seen as a route to compensation, but party representatives and observers to the WIM are working hard to shift the emphasis from compensating for loss to building capacity to deal with risk."

Rachel James et al. (Oxford University Centre for the Environment)
Characterizing loss and damage from climate change in Nature Climate Change (Opinion & Comment).
Weblink: <http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/v4/n11/full/nclimate2411.html>

Meet the RA'15 organizers:

Christian Barthelt

was awarded a degree in economic geography by Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich, in 2008. His studies focused on regional economic networks and tourism in developing countries.



After completing his degree, he joined a Munich-based IT services agency as an e-learning author. Christian has been working as a project manager for the Munich Re Foundation since February 2009. He manages projects on disaster prevention, social vulnerability and resilience, as well as projects in the areas of climate change and education.

He is also involved with other tasks such as online communication (website and newsletter), supervising interns and preparing the Munich Re Foundation's environmental review.

Meet the RA'15 organizers:

Kees van der Geest

(PhD) is a human geographer who studies the impacts of climate change, adaptation, human mobility, environmental change, livelihood resilience and rural development with a people-centred perspective. He has extensive fieldwork experience, mostly in Ghana (5 years), but also in Burkina Faso, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bolivia. Presently he works as senior researcher at UNU-EHS in Bonn where he coordinates the work on "Loss and damage from climate change in vulnerable countries" and a 5-year research-to-action project about livelihood resilience in Bangladesh (the Gibika' project).



Kees studied at the University of Amsterdam and 3 months at the University of Sussex. From 2006 to 2009 he was a lecturer at the geography department of the University of Amsterdam where he taught courses on environment and development.



What is next?

The Resilience Academy is currently moving forward with the second set of participants. This year participants proposed about thirty paper ideas. Participants will meet again in September 2016 in Germany to finalise the paper.



Resilience Academy aims to produce scientific papers published in peer reviewed journals to influence development strategies and decision making process in the UNFCCC. Experts from different corners of the world are now under one umbrella to move forward towards making positive change. Researchers and practitioners, along with policy makers are filling each others' gaps. The publication of nine working papers and a journal article on Nature Climate Change was an achievement from the first set of RA. From the second set of, RA, thirty-two papers expected to be produced

by September 2016, out of which, at least twenty would serve as finished products to provide knowledge to the UNFCCC decision making process.

These research papers and storytelling documentaries are intended to contribute to negotiations in COP22 in Marrakesh as well as to the IPCC AR6 in the near future. In addition to research, this Resilience Academy placed a strong emphasis on practitioners and their ideas. For instance, one participant pitched her idea of



using environmentally friendly bricks for house construction to help minimize carbon emissions from traditional brick kilns. The Academy is looking forward to follow the development of some of these action agendas.

Feedback from the participants:

“Good mix of participants – researchers, early career, practitioners. Good to integrate and talk with leading practitioners in this field.”

“The village that we saw was really impressive and worth the trip to see such a great example of a village who is in trouble.”

“Include someone from the community – local fisherman, local village woman, local pastoralist. It would be great to include someone like this to give us original insights into their issues.”

“Exciting to meet key persons in this group that have a really strong link to important people. Great that they invite us to be part of it and give feedback and make suggestions. Very special experience.”

“Very refreshing to be part of this and have discussions with researchers and practitioners. Good to have a team of resource people and people who contribute to the discussion.”

“Logistics were well done and the response time to e-mails from the organizers prior to the academy was great”

“Theme of the academy – really interesting, lots of good connections and good presentations/discussions.”

“Structure in the beginning was good, but opening a little more free time for unstructured dialogue would have been useful to help have useful conversations.”

“Everybody was very open to hearing new ideas and different perspectives.”

“Clear through line of loss and damage was interesting and exciting. Very appropriate topic.”