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Building Back Greener: Environmental Accountability in the Post-Pandemic Context

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INTRODUCTION

Towards Greening Accountability

*By **Mihir R. Bhatt**, All India Disaster Mitigation Institute, India*

After the past three waves of the pandemic now time has come to make accountability greener, that is, with smaller and even smaller carbon footprints and larger and more larger roles of ecosystem based activities and results. And this is not only a conclusion from AIDMI's own work in India, and in South Asia, but a call from all esteemed contributors to this publication.

Hardly ever before perhaps such a large and diverse number of individuals from many levels and many sectors have looked at greener accountability in such compact and urgent manner. AIDMI is excited to bring this collection of new insights to South Asia, to the accountability field, and to the "green" fields such as climate action and resilience studies.

What we have from the contributors are trends, case studies, examples, and more for the readers of this publication for the practioners and researchers in the field, for donors, for authorities and for UN system.

There are indeed some initiatives taking place to make accountability greener to affected populations. Geneva based ICRC comes to mind in the first place. Accountable Now is another such leader in the field. And it is hoped that this publication will help accelerate such initiatives.

As a senior advisor to CDKN AIDMI found that taking this idea of greener accountability is going to be lonely. Not many agree to this need but those who do agree are too slow to act. Ways must be found to redeem such loneliness with fierce compassion for both, accountability and "greening". This publication is one such way.

The purpose of green accountability is not to re-establish the statuesque of the accountability within the system but to herald a transformation of accountability, as well as, with the help of accountability, of the whole system. This idea of greener accountability being transformative itself as well as to the systems around came out from AIDMI dialogues over past three months with leading mentors in this field, including, mentors from Groupe URD in France, ADAPT in UK, and Open University in Dhaka. This publication helps serve this purpose.

Environmental accountability is not about the environment alone, as the environment is seen, today, but for environment in its broadest sense, removing human-environment separation - counting, man and women as part of and the product of the natural environment with a focus on air, water, land, vegetation, light, and more. This publication broadens the scope of greener accountability.

AIDMI's recent participation in the UN's IASC group on COP27 follow up made it clear that who leads greener accountability will matter a lot. This leadership, AIDMI finds, will best come from women in disaster, climate change, and SDG initiatives. No doubt women are best suited to take the idea of greener accountability, not only to other women, but to all in the coming years.

Post pandemic times – though the pandemic waves are recurring – demands we look at us, our health, and environment better. During the lockdown in many cities, it was possible once again to see the return of varieties of lost species of butterflies in spring, or see distant mountain ranges that had not been visible since decades. The green accountability will unfold in this pandemic context and use the context as an opportunity to herald new age of greener accountability. This publication offers post-pandemic role for greener accountability.

As a participant at Regional Humanitarian Partnership Forum, December 2022, Bangkok, said after AIDMI presentation on ALNAP's State of Humanitarian System (SOHS 2022) launch, somewhat mockingly, but profoundly, that "greening accountability, in the end, is both, "seeing" green in accountability and "practicing" accountability in green adaptation and mitigation measures." This is not easy but cannot be so difficult for local civil society actors in South Asia to achieve. This publication encourages such civil society actors in South Asia.

"No point if greener accountability in the end does not reduce insecurity, inequality and enhance democracy" away from fast spreading authoritarianism and majoritarianism in South Asia, said a family cotton farm holder participant of AIDMI's field work in Maharashtra in 2022. ■

HOW CSOS ARE MEETING (OR NOT) THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Accountability in the Civil Society Sector: Key Trends, Opportunities and Challenges

*By **Mary Sprague,** Accountable Now, Germany*

Accountable Now is a global platform that supports its Members and partner organisations in being transparent, accountable and responsive to the people we work for and with. Accountable Now´s Members sign on to 12 Accountability Commitments with the purpose of fostering a closer link to the people impacted by their work, to continuously improve and strengthen their impact and to enhance their individual and collective contribution to improve people's lives and the environment. Beyond the reporting framework, Accountable Now works with its Members to promote a dynamic approach to accountability, grounded in meaningful engagement with all stakeholders and shifting power towards those affected by our work.

The past decade has made it clear - climate change is happening and we are already experiencing the impacts of it; from extreme heat waves and drought to an increase in the frequency and severity of major storm events. It is not only climate change - environmental degradation due to the exploitation of our natural resources from the forests to the oceans, pollution, and other harmful human activities are putting people's livelihoods in danger. Experts have called for immediate and drastic climate action to limit the worst consequences of climate change with most estimates giving us only one decade to fundamentally change the way we live before the effects are irreversible.

Despite the enormity of the challenge and the slow progress made to address climate change thus far, there are reasons for hope! Recent years have demonstrated a growing public awareness of climate change and the urgent need to mitigate its worst impacts – building political and public will to take climate action. Historically, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have advocated for environmental protection - either directly to combat climate change or indirectly as the impacts of environmental degradation affect everyone, including the people and communities that CSOs are working for and with. However, in recent years CSOs have increased their efforts and moved towards practising what they preach by transforming their own practices and taking actions to mitigate their own impact on the environment, including taking responsibility for the allocation of resources to activities that have a negative environmental impact.

Accountable Now works so that CSOs are held to account to the environment through Commitment 3 of the 12 Commitments for CSO Accountability - **A Healthy Planet**.

During their annual or bi-annual reporting process, Accountable Now's Members report on how they demonstrate responsible stewardship for the environment (C5 of the reporting questions). With years of reports collected, we have seen that while environmental accountability has historically been a point of weakness for many of our Members, past years have demonstrated an increase in action with CSOs introducing new environmental policies and detailing more initiatives to reduce the negative environmental impacts of their work. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic forced every CSO around the world to reflect on their approach to change and to test out new ways of advancing their strategic goals that required less travel, for example. It was through this new way of living and working that organisations have made stronger commitments to reduce their environmental impact.

In 2020, we took a deep dive into our 3rd commitment, looking back at the 2019 Members´ Accountability Reports to understand how our Members are advancing towards this commitment.

To understand and learn from how our Members continue to adopt and how their procedures evolve (or not!) over time, we conducted a similar analysis looking at our Members' reports submitted in 2021/22[1]. In this analysis, we noticed an increased uptake over the previous study, with more organisations setting in place

[1] Due to CO-VID19 related staffing shortages and other factors, we received fewer reports in 2021/22 therefore our data sample was smaller.

formal environmental policies and procedures.

Looking at the same indicators that were used to evaluate Commitment 3[2], we can see growth in the number of Members fulfilling the commitment. In fact, in the reports we received in 2021/22, several organisations including CBM (view report here) and Plan International (view report here) stated that they recently rolled out an environmental policy, or are currently developing one to be implemented over the next few years. We found a growing number of Member organisations that previously did not track carbon emissions have begun to collect data and apply this to reduce their carbon footprints (such as CBM, who began offsetting their emissions for the first time in 2021 - see report here). We have also seen more environmental task forces within organisations to lead on the development, implementation, and monitoring of environmental practices and policies like ChildFund Australia's Green Team (see here). These examples are just a few to demonstrate that more organisations are mainstreaming the environment within their organisation's policies and practices.

Going beyond these measures, we have seen a growing number of more innovative approaches that aim to reduce negative environmental impacts. Here are some of the trends and good practices we have identified from the 2020-21 reports:

- **AIMING FOR CARBON NEUTRALITY**
  Aiming to do better than reducing carbon emissions, we have identified a growing trend of organisations working to achieve net zero carbon. For example, Amnesty International has stated in their 2020 report that they are aiming for the entire movement to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035. Similarly, Sightsavers[3] has reported that they are aiming to become carbon neutral by 2050. This is a great step forward for organisations, as they recognize the importance of minimising their harm on the environment and taking drastic measures to reduce it.

- **INCLUDING THE ENVIRONMENT AT A STRATEGIC LEVEL**
  Another major step towards climate action and environmental protection is the inclusion of these values in CSOs´ organisational strategies. For example, Transparency International wrote in their 2021 report[4] that they have placed climate and environmental protection as a core principle in their Strategy 2030. Similarly, World Vision International (WVI) has included environmental protection at the strategic-level, embedding an environment/ climate strategic initiative across their programmes, operations and facilities, and advocacy and marketing (see their 2020

[2] The indicators can be found in C5 of the reporting questions.
[3] Sightsavers' 2020/21 Biennial Report is currently undergoing the review process, therefore the report is not yet available online.
[4] Transparency International's 2021 report is also undergoing the review process and not yet available online. See their Strategy 2030 here: https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/Strategy2030_Brochure-final_15022021.pdf

Accountability Report). These are just two examples that demonstrate a growing recognition of the importance of climate action and environmental protection as a core organisational value.

- **INCLUDING THE ENVIRONMENT AT A PROGRAMMATIC LEVEL**

  Organisations are also including the environment as a cross-cutting value across their programmes. For example, in their 2020 report, EDUCO shared 2 projects being carried out by country offices; including a 'Climate Resilience through Action Research' project in Bangladesh and the 'Protecting our planet and building wellbeing: the relationship between environmental work and the fulfilment of children's and young people's rights' project by EDUCO Bolivia.

  Additionally, a growing number of organisations have been contributing to policy development, including World Vision International who have outlined a partnership in their 2020 report with ODI 'Contributing to through our Green Recovery post COVID-19'. We have also seen a growing trend of CSOs partnering with international organisations such as the UN or advocating during international events such as the COP events to help drive the climate agenda. For example, Restless Development fought for youth inclusivity during the COP26 discussions in Glasgow by supporting five youth climate activists to attend (read more here).

- **ADOPTING MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY WAYS OF WORKING**

  One silver lining of the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel disruptions was that many organisations reported major reductions in their carbon emissions and other resources during 2020-2022, due to severely reduced travel and the limiting of face-to-face meetings and events. Recognizing the reduced negative environmental impacts related to less travel and less face-to-face meetings, organisations have carried these actions forward and have adapted their practices - switching to hosting more virtual meetings when possible (for example only holding in-person AGMs every second or third year). When travel is required, organisations are committing to minimising their impact through greener travel modes such as train travel rather than flights, even adopting sustainable travel policies, such as Transparency International who adopted their Sustainable Travel Policy in 2020.

While we have largely seen a mainstreaming of the environment within many organisation's policies and practices, this trend is not seen across the board. While some organisations have gone above and beyond, committing to carbon neutrality and other aggressive strategies, other organisations have yet to develop the basics - policy, emissions tracking, etc. That is why Accountable Now is committed to advancing environmental protection and climate action not only within our Membership but across the civil society sector. One of the major barriers for CSOs to advance environmental protection is the need to balance competing interests. Due to commitments to use funds efficiently, value for money must always be taken into consideration and the higher costs of sustainable travel modes may be prohibitive.

Slowing down climate change in the hopes of limiting some of its worst consequences is imperative for the health, safety, and wellbeing of the entire world, particularly those that are most affected and which, unfortunately, tend to be the communities that have historically been marginalised in society - such as nations of the Global South already facing devastating impacts of climate change such as sea-level rise and extreme drought, or communities of colour in cities of the Global North that have been disproportionately affected by global warming due to systemic racist policies and are facing environmental health risks due to air pollution and extreme heat to name a few.

Given the extent of the task at hand, addressing climate change requires an 'all hand on deck' approach and CSOs can, and should, play a major role in ensuring that solutions for addressing the climate crisis are just, inclusive, equitable, accountable, transparent and participatory. CSOs must ensure that those responsible for contributing more than their share to the problem are held accountable to those who are most affected - and who will experience the worst outcomes. In addition, as a social sector, we must play our part and lead by example. We must ensure that we hold ourselves accountable to future generations, leaving behind a healthy planet!

Other Resources:

1. Webinar: Engaging Stakeholders in Climate Advocacy Actions
2. Cheatsheet: How to Maintain Healthy Planet as a Cross-Cutting Value in CSOs Work
3. AIF Report: Accountability in Focus - Environment
   Guide: A Guide to Creating Accountable Virtual Annual General Meetings ■

Climate Finance: How Can Integrity Make a Difference?

*By **Brice Böhmer,** Climate and Environment Lead, Transparency International, Berlin, Germany*

Rapid climate action means there's a need for much higher levels of climate finance than past and current ones. It's no surprise, therefore, that climate finance was the central topic at COP27, which took place in Egypt in November 2022. But how transparent and accountable has climate finance been until now, and what governance challenges must be addressed if we want climate finance to reach those who need it?

While most of the architecture of the Paris Agreement has now been agreed on, discussions about implementation are only gaining steam. As usual, the crux is finance. At COP27, three key financial aspects have been discussed. Firstly, though climate finance by some estimates reached US$632 billion in 2019/2020, a recent assessment found that the reality is much bleaker. Developed countries only mobilised US$83.3 billion in 2020 out of the US$100 billion that was promised in 2009 - some other estimates even suggest less than half of that amount. What's more, concerns remain about the degree these funds were additional, just and accessible, and qualitative: in terms of the instruments (loans vs grants), channels (international institutions) but also in terms of its impact. A progress report of the COP26 Climate Finance Delivery Plan has been released ahead of COP27, and includes the urge to double adaptation financing. Secondly, the first annual high-level ministerial dialogue took place to advance the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) that looks at levels of finance after 2025 that still need to be determined. Thirdly, the question of finance for Loss & Damage has taken an important turn and has been a central aspect of the negotiations, resulting in the establishment of a new financial mechanism.

The 'Transparency Framework' supposedly forms the backbone of the Paris Agreement, but much more work needs to be done as transparency is currently far from being the rule. And when we look at accountability and integrity, there is even more room for improvement. Climate finance is vulnerable to corruption in many ways as climate change and corruption are interrelated: corruption fuels climate change and impedes the fight against its causes and consequences. Corruption plays a role as a vehicle but also as a key driver of climate change: it exacerbates the displacement of environmental and social damage from global North to global South, sometimes even leading to Human Rights abuses as can be seen in the outrageous levels of impunity when it comes to attacks and killings of environmental defenders.

According to a study by Transparency International (TI) Bangladesh, 54% of climate finance for mitigation projects in the country have been misappropriated through corruption and mismanagement. And even though corruption is hard to unveil, the sample looked at in Bangladesh is not an isolated case. If you are in doubt, just have a look at the Climate & Corruption Atlas TI is constructing at the moment. It shows that climate corruption can be seen in all parts of the world and takes many different shapes and forms: from undue influence by powerful individuals and businesses to delay the transition or weaken environmental standards to embezzlement that reduces the funds available for adaptive infrastructure.

So what would it mean to operate a shift in terms of climate finance? Besides the urgent need to accelerate its levels from billions to trillions, the transformation must include a change to models of International Financial Institutions (IFIs). We must aspire to the opposite of the current situation where only around 2% of funds reach vulnerable communities. We need better accountability mechanisms where civil society and communities can participate in the implementation of climate finance projects and where the transition is shielded from undue influence and conflict of interest.

To move closer to these goals, we must work hand in hand with existing bodies like the Independent Integrity Unit of the Green Climate Fund, as well as anti-corruption and environmental agencies: together with civil society and communities, they can play a key role in maintaining integrity. ■

THE NEED FOR LOCALLY LED CLIMATE ACTION

Tears from My Village

*By **Michael Mwansa**, Project Officer, Edutainment Health Foundation, Lusaka, Zambia*

Many years ago, in Chief Bundabunda's village of Rufunsa District in Zambia, there was an enormous magical tree that produced sweet and nutritious fruit for the community. The people called it 'Chinsimbi' which meant iron. It was the biggest and tallest tree in the village, with large branches and green leaves. The tree provided shelter to millions of birds and fertile soil to peasant farmers within the village. Next to it was a spring of water that provided nutrients to farmland, livestock, vegetation and birds. The tree and spring existed in perfect harmony with one complimenting the other - to some it would seem that they were connected.

In this village, the majority of the people were farmers who believed that the tree called upon the rain that fed their crops, sustaining their food supply and without pests or disease. The village relied on the tree for almost everything – food, energy, water, health and much more. This continued for many years, until a message came. The chief received a message that there was a strong wind coming, so strong that it would uproot the magical tree. Everyone began to panic, no one was happy with this news. They asked their leader what to do. No one believed the message would come to pass until finally one day it happened, the wind fell the magical tree.

Previously, all living creatures were happy and basked in the abundance that the tree provided. There was an unlimited supply of both food and shelter, enough to cater for everyone. Animals would play under the tree. Birds would sing happy songs in the morning as the sun rose, waking the villagers to a bright day filled with hope and productivity and later in the evening when the sun set, the birds would hum sweet melodies sending the villagers into a deep and tranquil state of peace. The tree had now fallen and everyone was dismayed.

The people were so devastated that they went to the chief for guidance. He had received word from a very distant town that the destructive wind called 'climate change' had caused the tree to fall and had come from a mine town from a far country. The people did not understand why the wind would come to destroy their tree. Without the tree and its stream to provide life for the village, they did not know what to do. Left with no opportunities, they began cutting down other trees and selling them to buy food from the mine town. They used up all their water and ate all the fruit, leaving the animals thirsty and birds no longer able to sing sweet melodies. The people of Rufunsa continue to suffer the effects caused by a wind they do not fully understand.

At the end of every year, there was always a huge festival under the tree in which villagers poured food into the river, thanking the gods for a bountiful season. This year however, many of the villagers shied away from the ceremony, isolating themselves in their houses. They were now plagued by all sorts of effects brought by the wind; there was too much sun, the stream was dry and there was no water, the ground was cracked, and there were locusts and worms in the plants. The once flourishing village was now a ghost town.

How could this story have been different? Imagine if the community had been engaged to actively participate in community developments - playing an active role in leading and decision making. If the villagers and Chief Bundabunda had been engaged in a dynamic way to hold those responsible for contributing to climate change accountable, perhaps they could have saved the tree and protected life in their village. ■

Imagine if the community had been engaged to actively participate in community developments - playing an active role in leading and decision making. If the villagers and Chief Bundabunda had been engaged in a dynamic way to hold those responsible for contributing to climate change accountable.

A Coalition of CSOs for Safe Cities: The Case of Kabwe

*By **Njavwa Simukoko,** Zambian Governance Foundation, Zambia*

Kabwe, a town in the Central Province of Zambia with a population of over 200,000, was home to one of the first copper and lead mines in Zambia from 1904-1994. Mining was carried out by many companies, including Anglo America, and later the state-owned Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines-IH. After independence in 1964, the mine was nationalised. The mine was eventually closed in 1994 without preparing and implementing a comprehensive closure and clean-up plan.

The faulty closure of the mine left areas of Kabwe town closer to the mine heavily polluted with lead, which is a heavy metal that is highly toxic to humans when ingested or inhaled. According to the World Health Organization, there is no known safe level of lead exposure. Elevated lead levels damage the brain, kidneys, liver, stomach, nerves, and blood cells. This may result in multiple serious health problems, such as impaired growth, IQ deficits, behavioural problems, hearing loss, vision loss, high blood pressure, and the risk of coma and convulsions. Lead poisoning can also cause death. Children are especially at risk because their bodies absorb four to five times as much lead as adults, and their bodies are still developing. By the end of 2020, with funding from the World Bank, the Zambian government had tested more than 10,000 children for lead in Kabwe and 2,500 were found to have BLLs of 45 µg/dL and higher. These are very dangerous levels.

Environment Africa, through a coalition of civil society organisations in and outside Zambia, has been working on addressing the problem of lead pollution in Kabwe since 2015 through public awareness, soil testing, remediation work, transparency and accountability, research (Human Rights report), policy advocacy and profiling the problem to be acknowledged in the public domain especially by the government and former owners of the mines. The road has not been easy and many people in Kabwe did not know the magnitude of the problem and potential risks that lead posed on their health. Through sensitization work in almost all the schools in Kabwe and door-to-door lead awareness sessions led by trained community facilitators in affected areas there has been change in terms of knowledge and awareness of the problem.

The Zambian Governance Foundation (ZGF) alongside other civil society organisations conducted a great amount of advocacy work in order to bring the problem to the attention of political leaders in Kabwe, nationally and at an international level. Previously, many politicians and administrators did not prioritise this problem in their resource allocation and development agenda however civil society organisations have engaged the New Dawn Government through a letter to his Excellency the President of Zambia and he has prioritised the issue of pollution in Kabwe by instituting a multi-sector technical committee under the Ministry of Green Economy and the Environment to develop a remediation strategy. The committee will be reporting progress to the President. Following years of disregard for the issue, gaining the political will from the highest office in Zambia to address the problem has been a very positive step.

Civil society organisations have also made great strides in making sure that the Kabwe issue is treated as a human rights issue and given the attention and remedies needed at regional and global level. In 2016 Environment Africa, Terre des Hommes and other CSOs developed an alternative report and presented it at the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Children Day of General Discussions in Geneva about the ongoing threats to the community caused by lead. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Children prioritised this issue and made recommendations to the Zambian government through the UN Concluding observations calling upon the government to address the problem and report progress in subsequent state party reports. CSOs have also produced and submitted shadow/alternative reports to the African Union African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children committee and have since communicated to the Zambian government.

In 2021, CSOs engaged the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Toxics and Human Rights and an allegation letter was sent to the government for consideration. This issue is still pending and the Special Rapporteur has expressed interest to travel to Zambia to assess the situation and see how best the issue can be addressed collaboratively.

Civil society organisation's efforts have not only been directed at raising

awareness within the government, but also have opened spaces for community discourse. Through the advocacy work of civil society organisations, it is now pleasing to note that the issue of lead poisoning due to the former mine is no longer a taboo and scary issue to discuss to talk about it as it was a couple of years ago. CSOs have created spaces for children and youth, who are at higher risk due to the contamination in Kabwe, to talk about this issue amongst their peers and also participate in decision-making processes about lead pollution in Kabwe. The youths have produced documentaries and stories that they have shared online and with duty bearers.

Growing awareness of the issue has also opened opportunities for collaboration. Community members, churches and civil society in Kabwe have come together and have been participating in various forms in supporting the class action lawsuit that Leigh Day has launched in the courts in South Africa to get compensation for people in Kabwe from mining companies. Thanks to the work being done by community members and civil society, things that looked far fetched and impossible 10 years ago, such as compensation for those at risk, is now being discussed openly by community members and CSOs

The road has been very long and challenging for environmental rights defenders working on addressing the problem of lead pollution in Kabwe, but a lot has been achieved and the landscape is now more favourable than it was a few years ago. There are more players and dialogue with duty bearers has greatly improved and this gives CSOs and communities in Kabwe hope that the areas affected will be remediated and that those responsible for contributing to the issue will be held to account.

Note: The Zambian Governance Foundation is part of the Coalition of CSOs in Zambia that are working on the matter and through our advocacy channels we have a weekly newsletter that has over 5000+ subscribers with close to 1600+ of those being local CSOs. We are also leading the formulation of the Communications and Advocacy Strategy for the coalition that is very central to the campaign. ■

SOHS REPORT LAUNCH

Changing Humanitarian System in Asia: SOHS Report Launch in Bangkok

*by **Mihir R. Bhatt**, AIDMI, India*

All India Disaster Mitigation Institute (AIDMI) joins the panel at the launch of State of the Humanitarian System (SOHS) Report 2022 at the Regional Partnership Forum in Bangkok on December 9th.

Photo: AIDMI.

Juliet Parker, ALNAP, presented the findings to the Asian partners.

Mihir Bhatt, AIDMI, gave examples of how the report is used by AIDMI with and for the recent heatwave and the pandemic affected population that AIDMI works with.

Over 200 participants from the UN, civil society, and local authorities in Asia Pacific region joined the launch. ICVA, CHS, ALNAP, and ADRRN co-hosted the launch.

"Localisation of humanitarian efforts must make it democratic and decentralized," argued Bhatt.

Tremendous scope for the utilization of the findings of the report in the work of humanitarian organizations in the region was acknowledged by the participants. ■

JUSTICE AND EQUITY IN CLIMATE PHILANTHROPY

Getting from "No" to "Yes" for Climate Justice

*by **Janet Camarena,** Senior Director of Learning Experience, Candid, United States*

A philanthropy insider once shared that foundations develop guidelines so they know to whom to say "no." Though it sounded cynical and harsh, it also rang true. My years in the field have only served to reinforce the assertion, as I have witnessed the growing trend of foundations undergoing a strategic planning process, then narrowing their guidelines, followed by shifting to an "invitation only" process so they can handpick grantee partners that align with ever-narrowing portfolio priorities, all in hopes of being able to quantify their foundation's impact. Meanwhile, the planet burns and many already vulnerable communities are displaced. There is much hand-wringing, but little in the way of actual financial support. This is because most foundations do not see themselves as climate or justice funders.

I am reminded of that tendency now as we release Candid and Ariadne's new funder's guide about the why and how of climate justice, *Centering equity and justice in climate philanthropy*. Despite its urgency, most foundation funders do not incorporate climate or climate justice strategies into their work. As a result, not enough funding is flowing to climate change efforts and even less of it for reducing harm to communities most impacted by the climate crisis.

The guide cites Climate Works' data that less than 2% of giving flows to climate mitigation efforts. Of that, in 2019 only a fraction (about $60 million) went to support equity or justice related efforts. In essence it's a tiny slice of a tiny slice. The reality that vulnerable communities who are often most impacted by the effects of climate change are also the communities least responsible for causing it makes the unfairness of this lack of support particularly glaring.

But it doesn't have to be this way. In many ways, the last two years have restored my faith in philanthropy to be a force for good and not just a force for asserting the good (narrow as it may be) it is doing in the world.

The pandemic, and then the racial reckoning following the murder of George Floyd, has illustrated all too well the connective tissue between inequality and negative outcomes for the most vulnerable. Prior to the pandemic, few foundations were infectious disease funders. But, as a result of the global crisis, every responsible funder had to adapt and respond to new needs facing communities due to COVID, and many did so in creative ways.

Workforce development funders created strategies to support small businesses. Humanitarian relief funders became more aware of grantee struggles with infrastructure costs related to technology and transportation and were more likely to invest in organizational capacity. Education funders offered support to enable remote learning, and funders of all kinds moved money more quickly and flexibly to address the sudden growth in social safety net needs. Funders were also increasing transparency by more frequently communicating about their pandemic response funding, which served to help all concerned have a better understanding of the crisis, nascent strategies, and the emerging ecosystems of support.

There was also a growing understanding that centering equity in these grants was essential to mitigating the inequities of COVID's impact. This means, when pressed, philanthropy can flex its guidelines and meet the moment to address urgent need, all while also improving accountability through improved transparency about grant making programs and policy changes. The climate crisis is analogous to the pandemic. It's not a binary question of whether your guidelines state you are or are not a climate or justice funder. Much like the pandemic, it is likely that most grantee communities will in some way be impacted by increasing climate disasters. Grantmakers should be thinking *now* about how to use a climate justice lens within their existing programs to plan ahead to address this reality. The new guide provides helpful and instructive case studies to illustrate how other funders have taken such steps.

For example, the guide shares how savvy education funders are considering the impact of learning loss on students who every year miss more and more days of instruction due to the climate crisis. The guide also includes a case study about the Disability Rights Fund's work to ensure Indigenous women with disabilities are included in decision-making processes, programs, and policies related to climate change mitigation in their communities.

We've learned important lessons from the pandemic for how philanthropy can address the most pressing issues of our time. These lessons apply especially to climate. This guide provides a playbook so you don't have to reinvent strategies that already exist or make the assumption that they're not relevant to your agenda. We know the crisis is coming. We know it will grow worse over time. So, take time to plan ahead and think about the ways in which your guidelines call you to say "yes" to climate justice. ■

Working Towards a Consensus on How the Green Energy Transition Can Achieve Both Climate Neutrality and Biodiversity Objectives

by ***Haris Paliogiannis,*** *MIO-ECSDE, Greece*

Curbing climate change and reversing biodiversity decline are among the great challenges modern societies face and both are closely linked to the future energy system scenarios. Transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources can substantially mitigate climate change impacts, and it is increasingly considered as the safest pathway to decarbonization. Specifically, for wind energy, it is one of the most developed renewable energy types. Yet it is also controversial, regarding its impact on biodiversity and the landscape.

To meet global climate goals, countries are moving towards scaling up their wind energy production through larger and more wind farms in order to decarbonize their economies by 2040. At the same time, to meet another obligation and fulfil the 30% coverage target of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (whereby signatories work towards ensuring that 30% of the planet is covered by protected areas and other land uses that protect and restore biodiversity by the year 2030), their conservation actions are expected to claim larger tracts of land and ocean. Hence countries are faced with a *"green vs green"* dilemma: on the one hand maintaining biodiversity, or restoring it, and achieving climate goals on the other.

Unfortunately, the fast-tracking of renewable energy projects with little or no engagement of the local communities, or nature protection aspects in the planning and implementation, is only too common the world over, with a rising number of renewable energy installations sited in and around vulnerable natural and cultural heritage sites. The Mediterranean region is no exception, with an added challenge: it is a biodiversity hotspot which is more vulnerable to global warming than other regions.

Working in this setting, and in an effort to address the many concerns raised by its member NGOs and other stakeholder groups it closely works with, MIO-ECSDE decided to co-develop a reflection document on how the Mediterranean's transition to renewables (with emphasis on wind energy) can happen in a participatory way, while guiding everyone involved to do so at a minimum cost to biodiversity. This required a better understanding of the realities of local communities, the wind energy sector, conservationists and decision makers, in order to be genuinely supportive in this necessary green energy transition and provide a tool for raising awareness, advocacy, and policy formulation at all governance levels. Interviews with experts, wide consultation with our member NGOs and exchanges with academia, the renewable energy industry and managers of protected areas led to a reflection paper in pursuit of finding the maximum consensus for truly sustainable solutions on this topic.

The reflection paper[5] outlines the potential challenges and solutions related to a broad spectrum of environmental and social impacts of wind energy technologies and outlines some key recommendations to ensure that the aggregated effects of wind energy development are sufficiently considered, so as not to disrupt the components of a just and equitable energy transition.

In our collective efforts to preserve what we have while trying to prevent further damage, the paper concludes that creating clear exclusion zones to facilitate permitting procedures for wind energy projects, minimising risks to vulnerable taxa during wind project operation, increasing wind turbine material sustainability and establishing meaningful and early consultation processes with local communities are some of the most critical issues that require more efforts to maximise the co-benefits of climate change and biodiversity policies and strategies. Midway through co-developing the paper with the many stakeholders, the war on Ukraine brought on a whole new set of parameters related to energy, power, food security, geostrategic shifts, etc. creating high uncertainty in which direction the energy transition from gas will take us. But

[5] MIO-ECSDE's document can be accessed here: https://mio-ecsde.org/project/policy-paper-on-the-mediterraneans-wind-energy-transition/

these only made the main concerns and messages even more clear. Fossil fuels must be replaced; but this transition should be socially just and not detrimental to habitats and their capacity to: act as important carbon sinks; mitigate climate change and effectively support biodiversity.

As a network of environmental organisations, in the process of investigating such a controversial issue, where biodiversity and climate change are linked in a complex way, we found ourselves struggling to balance the needs of both, while aiming for reconciliation. One thing is certain: civil society organisations remain the key players in prioritising and pushing for meaningful participation and engagement in the energy transition - at all the levels it is taking place - to ensure that no one is left behind, including the environment, often as a 'silent partner'. ■

EVIDENCE FOR SMALL-SCALE, HOLISTIC FARMING PRACTICES

Holistic Agriculture in the Context of Climate Change: The Case of Demirsha Farm in Albania

*By **Lavdosh Ferruni,** Demrisha Farm, Albania*

'I sell my tomatoes at 80 lek per kg, double of the price in the market' proudly says Altin Demirsha, a small farmer from the village of Voskop in Korca, Albania. Altin is a farmer who also spends many days of the region's cold winters working in construction. Following the traditional farming practices taught by his parents, he has used the seeds of different crops passed down through generations of his family.

One of the varieties of tomatoes grown on Altin's farm, the 'Sereke' receive double the price of a standard tomato variety in the local market. This variety is grown, and is known, only in the region of Korca. Due to its rich taste, consumers are willing to pay more to buy it; however, the tomato causes logistical challenges as it cannot be transported long distances or does not have a long shelf life in supermarkets. Nevertheless, it is well suited for the local market since the 'Sereke' will continuously produce tomatoes for more than 2 months of the growing season. Altin is happy to produce this variety because the yield he gets from the "Sereke" is approximately 60 - 80 tons per hectare, and he has never experienced a crop failure.

Altin has achieved success following the traditional farming practices passed down through generations of his family, including seed saving - therefore, each year Altin collects the seeds from his plants to use the following season. Another practice passed from his father is crop rotation and producing their own livestock feed. Altin plants alfalfa and maize to be used for feed for the farm's two cows, along with beans and vegetables. Ismet, Altin's father, observed higher milk production over years from his cows that have been primarily fed by the maize produced on their farm, compared with cows fed with hybrid maize. He proudly attributes the higher milk production to his own maize which offers a higher nutrition value. The cows on the Demirsha farm play another valuable role due to manure production. The cows' manure is used to enrich the soil with organic matter which also contributes to higher yields of the 'Sereke' tomatoes. Although the Demirsha Farm has not been certified organic, the use of manure to fertilise the soil contributes to maintaining a healthier soil biome without the use of harsh chemical fertilisers.

Farms such as Demirsha represent a return to traditional methods in this time of industrialised agriculture. A combination of these traditional practices, enriched with modern farming knowledge, must be promoted and replicated as much as possible in order to increase food production and security, while minimising the negative impacts of growing food on the environment. This urgent need for a shift towards such farming practices that can guarantee greater food security has been highlighted by food shortages resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has resulted in stopping the movement of grain from Ukraine's ports and triggered massive food shortages in parts of the world, particularly across the African continent.

Demirsha farm demonstrates that a typical rural household, managed through traditional practices, is better adapted to climate change and can even contribute to mitigating climate change impacts through low input or organic agriculture, and through developing a local food market - fostering the 'zero-mile

Guests visit the demonstration field to sample the attractive Demirsha vegetable varieties.

food' or 'slow food' movement. In addition to adapting to, or mitigating, climate change impacts, mixed farming also guarantees a healthier soil and healthier food, contributing to better human health outcomes. Further, saving seeds on the farm makes a great contribution towards protecting biodiversity. The example of Demirsha farm highlights the many benefits of traditional farming practices and offers a more sustainable approach to food production that can alleviate the many harmful impacts that industrial agricultural methods have on the environment, such as soil degradation (attributed to factors including chemical fertilisation, salinisation, soil compaction, and the loss of organic matter in the soil) and which can heighten the vulnerability of agricultural land to climate change impacts such as flooding and drought[6].

Despite the many advantages of adopting traditional agricultural methods on smaller scale, mixed farms, there are many challenges to the growth of these practices over the industrial agricultural practices that are the mainstream. Major challenges include a lack of government policies and incentives, and a lack of awareness and education around this issue. Here lies a great opportunity for civil society organisations to support farmers in advocating for more government assistance and to provide space for the exchanging and sharing of knowledge. Civil society organisations, such as the Community Seed Bank Korca, are supporting farmers in accessing resources they need to adopt sustainable practices and helping train the next generation of sustainable farmers - ensuring that these traditional practices are carried into the future! ■

[6] IPCC, 2019: Climate Change and Land: an IPCC special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security, and greenhouse gas fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems [P.R. Shukla, J. Skea, E. Calvo Buendia, V. Masson-Delmotte, H.-O. Pörtner, D. C. Roberts, P. Zhai, R. Slade, S. Connors, R. van Diemen, M. Ferrat, E. Haughey, S. Luz, S. Neogi, M. Pathak, J. Petzold, J. Portugal Pereira, P. Vyas, E. Huntley, K. Kissick, M. Belkacemi, J. Malley, (eds.)]. In press.

Environmental Accountability as a Human Right Safeguarding Mechanism

*By **Elodie Le Grand,** President and Lead Consultant, Consentia, Canada*

Last July, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution recognizing "the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as human right". While this resolution is not legally binding, it does provide one additional tool to hold governments, and any organisation accountable, in regard to its contribution to climate change, use and management of natural resources, waste creation and so forth.

Environmental protection is interlinked with human rights respect, protection and promotion, social justice and the fight against poverty. One cannot try to tackle poverty and social justice without integrating the environment as a fundamental component of human rights. Social inequalities, extreme poverty, conflict and climate change are interlinked. Even organisations whose mission is to "save lives", can no longer avoid the environmental impacts of their operations and processes on the ecosystems that the populations they aim to help rely on. As such, the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is as universal; indivisible; interdependent and interrelated, as other human rights.

In light of the adoption of the UN resolution, how can civil society organisations enshrine environmental protection in their accountability practices?

Some organisations have advanced on this front and have already incorporated the environment in their accountability practices. They have identified the impacts of their operations on the environment, set goals for reduction and mitigation of negative impacts, and shared their successes, remaining challenges and lessons learned. Often, the environment is considered as a "silent stakeholder", and therefore not taken into consideration when organisations are thinking about accountability to their stakeholders. Thus, there is a need to shift from this perspective to an understanding of the "right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a human right". Organisations can refer to the human rights protection framework to move forward and mainstream their responsibility to respect, protect, promote a clean, healthy and sustainable environment in their accountability practices.

Regardless of the fact that organisations work in various fields; humanitarian aid, development work or advocacy, they can begin assessing their impacts per site (headquarters, country office, project site) and/or per product or service delivered.

The life-cycle approach is a good start. To begin, organisations should review all resources needed to operate: land used for infrastructure, energy, water, supplies, transportation, technology, goods and services, and so forth. Next, they can investigate how the products used or distributed are created. Where are they manufactured? How much resources (energy, land, natural resources) are needed to create, distribute, and use them? How often are they replaced by a newer one? How are they disposed of in their end-of-life? What kind of waste, and in which quantity, is generated? All departments should be involved: operations, procurement, logistics, finances, human resources. Even donors' relations departments, for communication and merchandising, need to be assessed.

Equipped with this information, organisations can next develop strategies that involve short and long-term changes, in line with specific goals. To hold themselves to account, organisations should set ambitious but achievable performance indicators of impact. Over time, organisations must monitor those indicators. A final and critical step is to report systematically on their achievements, constraints, success and lessons learned.

Such changes cannot be led by one person alone, it needs a team, the support of senior management and of course, dedicated human and financial resources.

Mainstreaming environmental protection and promotion as a human right, and being accountable for it, is key to maintaining social license to operate and legitimacy. ■

Disclosures, Investment, and Humanitarian Action

*By **Prarthana Borah,** Director, CDP India, India*

The term "disclosure" is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as "the action or fact of revealing new or secret information or the action of making something openly known." Disclosures differ from standards. The latter sets the norms and criteria for action while the former is the act of revealing information.

CDP is a pioneer of voluntary environmental disclosures. CDP's disclosure framework is built on the premise that "you can't manage what you don't measure". The annual CDP disclosure process consists of generating information on emissions and identifying risks and opportunities, as well as reporting on strategies and governance systems in place to manage the company's climate, forest, and water footprint. CDP's efforts have broadened over time to cover a range of other topics including water, forestry, biodiversity, and more recently plastics.

While CDP holds the largest environmental database in the world, and CDP scores are widely used to drive investment and procurement decisions toward a zero carbon, sustainable and resilient economy, the relevance of this data to Humanitarian and Resilience Investing (HRI) needs to be explored. The engagement of the private sector, both large and small corporations, becomes very important in this journey to a sustainable and climate-resilient world. Businesses and stakeholders have the power to change and influence, be it lifestyles or cross-border relations, trade, finance, assets, raw materials, and product. Choices by a business, if done right, can demonstrate leadership in creating innovative strategies for improving climate resilience and promoting humanitarian action. Attaining net zero and enhancing the decarbonization journey for corporate sustainability is not restricted only to achieving environmental issues but also to developing human well-being. This includes empowerment, equity, health and improving quality of life. It also involves predicting and anticipating climate and other risks that can hamper human wellbeing.

Humanitarian and resilience Investing (HRI) is defined as capital invested in ways that measurably benefit people and communities in contexts of fragility, conflict, and violence while creating a financial return. HRI is a challenging area as it does not fit in one sustainable development goal. Because it relies heavily on social indicators, data generation is also not easy. In some cases, like the GRI reporting data is available but there is very little standardization at the project, program, or business level which makes it difficult to facilitate investment. While the SDGs have introduced the language of the humanitarian and development sectors to the financial sector, an appropriate format for data and disclosures that can contribute to HRI still needs more thought. For businesses, while ignoring the importance of workforce stability, retention of human capital, health, safety, and well-being of employees and suppliers is important, generating data remains a challenge. Most large companies are well-equipped with teams specializing in data collection and disclosure, while small- and medium-sized companies can rarely afford specialized resources to fulfil disclosure requirements. CDP Disclosure across the supply chain covers smaller companies and enterprises which can generate information on value chains. Insights from supply chain disclosures could contribute to HRI if considered carefully. Investors can seek to strengthen the "S" in Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) metrics and work

CDP encourages transparency through voluntary disclosure. With the influence of institutional investors, CDP drives the largest firms in the world to assess risks, identify opportunities and incentivize to curb emissions. From 2002, when 35 institutional investors signed a letter requesting data, (44% of firms responded) CDP disclosure by companies has grown. In 2021, Over 14,000 companies around the world, including more than 13,000 companies, worth over 64% of global market capitalization, disclosed data through CDP, with more than 680+ financial institutions, with over $130 trillion in assets signed up as signatories.

with reporting frameworks to identify investments that prevent fragile situations from developing into a crisis state.

Interest in HRI has increased in recent years, consistent with the rise in responsible, sustainable, and impact investment strategies. However, HRI has not yet become established as an investment theme, and there are few examples of HRI taking place compared with many other themes, such as renewable energy, water or even biodiversity. The pandemic and the recent Ukraine war show that HRI cannot be ignored for long and for recovery, requiring collaboration and innovation to pioneer projects and investments at a scale that will enable them to make a real impact and put the vulnerable at the centre of investments.

Data from disclosure can open a window of insights and need to be analysed to understand information gaps and improve to feed HRI investing. In the absence of innovative funding models, the gap between the resources available and the amount required will continue to increase. If we do not anticipate the humanitarian and resilience assistance required for a rapidly expanding global population that faces fragility and displacement, we could run into a situation that leaves millions increasingly vulnerable. ■

CLIMATE ACTION IN A POST-CONFLICT CONTEXT

Environment and Humanitarian Action in Afghanistan

*By **Sameera Noori,** Deputy Director General, Citizens Organization for Advocacy and Resilience (COAR), Afghanistan*

Afghanistan has been in a situation of protracted conflict for almost 40 years and as a result is facing a severe environmental crisis. Major environmental issues include depletion of aquifers, air and water pollution, soil degradation, deforestation, overgrazing, desertification, loss of biodiversity, climate change and urban sprawl into ecologically fragile areas. In addition, the country is frequently experiencing drought conditions and is currently facing the second drought in four years, the worst of its kind in 27 years. As a result, Afghanistan now has the highest number of people facing emergency food insecurity in the world – this is a terrifying 35 per cent increase from the same time last year. More than one in two children under-five is facing acute malnutrition and will be at risk of death if immediate action is not taken. The already over-burdened health system is straining to survive numerous shocks, including due to the continuing impact of COVID-19, spikes in waterborne diseases, frustratingly persistent strains of polio and a sudden collapse in predictable financing that has kept the nationwide health infrastructure afloat. The economic crisis currently facing the country has sent prices skyrocketing, while simultaneously diminishing people's purchasing power. People are increasingly desperate, have exhausted nearly all coping mechanisms and have resorted to taking on unmanageable debt burdens and relying on dangerous coping mechanisms to survive. The situation of women and girls is particularly dire as their rights and opportunities have become increasingly restricted.

CASH Distribution program in Logar Province of Afghanistan for the Crisis Affected Families.

Over the course of a tumultuous and unpredictable year, the humanitarian community has

CASH for Work project in Kunduz Province of Afghanistan.

proven its capacity to scale-up to meet new needs, including in response to recurrent natural disasters, escalating conflict, the withdrawal of international forces.

Before the fall of the Afghanistan Republic Government, number of actors, such as the NEPA, Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), OCHA and UNEP have had an important role in mainstreaming environment through coordination, provision of technical advice and information sharing. In addition, the humanitarian donor community has a role to play in requiring environmental due diligence of funded projects. There have been considerable advances over the past 20 years in Afghan environmental regulation that humanitarians need to be fully aware of. The NEPA, created in 2005, is responsible for coordinating and monitoring conservation and rehabilitation of the environment and for the implementation of Environment Law of Afghanistan including oversight of Environmental Impact Assessments. While NEPA has a high level of awareness and broad knowledge of environmental impacts of the conflict, displacement, and humanitarian response, it has limited involvement with the humanitarian community and with key governmental agencies such as ANDMA and the Ministry for Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) on these issues.

More recently, in 2022, only the NGOs and Donor Community were responsible for mainstreaming environment through coordination, provision of technical advice and information sharing. In addition to that the Clusters such as a WASH, Education, FSAC, Emergency Shelter/NFI, and Health have specific environmental recommendations, thus contributing to environmental mainstreaming and were looked at in greater detail in addition to the Multisector Refugee Response efforts, however there is a dire need of the accountability system in environmental protection and humanitarian action for Recovery & Resilience, Reducing Disaster Risks. ■

Environmental Accountability and Rohingya Camps: A View

*By **Bulbul Siddiqi,** Associate Professor, Dept. of Political Science and Sociology, North South University, Bangladesh*

Refugee crises have become a growing concern in the present world. Among the ongoing refugee crises in the Middle East, Europe, Africa and South Asia, the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh represent one of the largest groups. The Rohingya influx into Bangladesh started in the late 1970s. Bangladesh has been witnessing a regular influx of Rohingya since then. The Rohingya influx in 2017 surpassed the previous episodes regarding the number and systematic persecution of the Rohingya in Myanmar. The Rohingya genocide in 2017 has been marked as a 'textbook example of ethnic cleansing'[7]. Recently the Biden government of the USA recognised this persecution as a genocide (Siddiqi, 2022).

To meet the demand for shelter for the influx of Rohingya, a green and hilly area had to be converted into one of the largest makeshift refugee camps in the world. However, immediate conversion from a green and hilly area to makeshift camps for a prolonged stay of the Rohingya had several socio-cultural, economic and environmental impacts on the host country. Primarily, the host communities were faced with difficulties on a day-to-day basis during their everyday livelihoods.

Environmental issues were not given much thought in the initial days of hosting the Rohingya as this was a humanitarian emergency, and Bangladesh had to respond in a timely manner. If the authorities had given too much consideration of the environmental issues, the process of sheltering the Rohingya would have been delayed significantly, and the persecuted Rohingya community would have had to suffer the most. However, the issue came to the discussion once several environmental issues were visible through comparing the satellite images of pre and post-Rohingya influx (Huq, 2018) and also after massive deforestation (Halim et al., 2021). To provide heat, the Rohingya had to rely on the firewood collected from areas neighboring the camps where they live (Tallis et al., 2019); although NGOs supported them with this, this was not adequate. The Rohingya communities were blamed for the environmental impacts in the areas (Choudury & Fazlulkader, 2019; Sadat al Sajib et al., 2022). Such blaming will not bring any solution.

[7] 'Myanmar treatment of Rohingya looks like 'textbook ethnic cleansing', says UN' retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/11/un-myanmars-treatment-of-rohingya-textbook-example-of-ethnic-cleansing accessed on 11th November 2019.

However, several initiatives have been taken to restore the green zone in the area, and many more have been proposed (Tallis et al., 2019). LPG for the Rohingya was introduced to reduce the pressure on the firewood, and an increased effort of plantations was also evident. However, inefficient waste management and drainage system in the camps area worsened the situation over time. Initially, the issue of waste management had been entirely ignored, although some waste recycling plants can be visible in the camps, they are insufficient given the number of Rohingya people living there. Soil degradation is another issue, which can be seen during the monsoon time. Monsoon also shows its worse face for the Rohingya as waterlogging is a common experience for many in the camps. Besides, they live at risk of natural disasters in the camps during the monsoon. Landslides, flash flooding, and tropical cyclones put the camps in a vulnerable situation (Zaman et al., 2020).

Moreover, the host community has already been showing dissatisfaction with the Rohingya as they initially experienced the impact, which is ongoing, and they do not know to what extent it would be extended. The host community had a long-term dependency on nature that has been disrupted. Natural habitats were also significantly disturbed as the area was overpopulated with Rohingya, which is the leading cause of the displacement of wildlife diversity in the region (Halim et al., 2021; Huq, 2018).

Who would be accountable for such environmental challenges is a big question. However, the management authority at the micro level is the key implementable body, and at the national level, the Government of Bangladesh has the authority to address these issues - with the help of international bodies. However, the Government has to propose a comprehensive strategy to address the environmental issues in the region under a refugee management policy. Presently, there is no comprehensive policy for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Besides, the idea of environmōzental legal claims is also in the discussion against Myanmar (Hammer & Ahmed, 2020). While talking about justice for the Rohingya, it is important to bring these environmental accountability issues against Myanmar.

Photo by: Mohammad Bulbul Ashraf Siddiqi, 2018.

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Environmental Accountability Actions in Thammasat University, Thailand

*By **Shweta Sinha**, PBIC, Thammasat University, Thailand*

Introduction

The global pandemic has demonstrated how change can be brought quickly at an individual, organizational, and institutional level. While the lockdown temporarily lead to a reduction in carbon emissions[8], emissions soon returned to normal levels once again in the second half of the year. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Thailand's air pollution level is 6 time higher (32 µg/m3 annual mean) than the WHO air quality guideline (5 µg/m3 annual mean) of PM2.5[9], leading to 23% of deaths from stroke and ischemic heart diseases caused by air pollution.

With existing national health and climate change plan or strategy (Phase 1) in Thailand[10], it is important to ensure that environment climbs up the priority ladder for all stakeholders and strong climate action is well integrated into future investments. Integrating environment into humanitarian programs and operations is important to ensure the effectiveness, sustainability, and accountability of humanitarian operations. Accountability involves taking account by participating and engaging, giving account by maintaining communication and transparency and taking the responsibility/ ownership of actions and non-actions. Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy is being highlighted in Thailand and is expected to redefine future developments as a part of management, health, environment, creativity, and education policies[11], by putting people first and understanding their needs to go beyond the top-down approach to accountability.

Thammasat University Solar Rooftop, Thailand.

Environment Accountability Actions in Thammasat University

Since its establishment in 1934, Thammasat University believes in the idea of "For the people" and supports knowledge transfer to local communities through various initiatives. Capacity building at the university explores environment friendly practices, highlighting nature-based solutions, understanding, and utilizing tools to measure environmental impacts. The idea of converting the university into a low carbon community involves various initiatives such as creating sustainable building designs, rooftop community gardens, utilizing sustainable mode of transportation on campus, educating and awareness raising through courses and events on environment and sustainability issues.

Many interesting initiatives include monitoring air quality and pollution data, tracking the water level for flood prevention within the university campuses, tracking waste information and building awareness by turning food waste into liquid biological fertilizer for utilizing on the campus, and installing solar panels on rooftops for producing electricity. Currently, the rooftop solar panels generate 7,554 MW of electricity - accounting for 10% of the total electricity consumption by the

[8] https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20210312-covid-19-paused-climate-emissions-but-theyre-rising-again
[9] https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/country-profiles/environmental-health/environmental-health-tha-2022.pdf?sfvrsn=faae38b6_4&download=true
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[11] https://www.nationthailand.com/business/40017490

Thammasat University Rooftop Farm (TURF), Thailand.

University in 2020. Further initiaves include; monitoring water quality standards according to the pollution control department (PCD) criteria, managing wetlands and other ecological spaces for promoting biological diversity and establishing the Tree Plotter Project to extend a successful campaign to protect large trees in the campus. Finally, the university has undertaken various initiatives in identifying and engaging with local stakeholders and providing funds and resources for service learning[12].

Since 2016, Thammasat University participates in the Integrity and Transparency Assessment (ITA) engaging the local stakeholders for monitoring good governance, level of integrity and transparency. ITA is initiated by the Office of the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) with about 8393 Thai government agencies participating. Engaging in cross sectoral dialogues and seminars at multiple levels and collecting SDG related data through NGO and international collaboration.

Thammasat University is committed to providing education for Sustainable Development through various mandatory general education courses and through specific bachelor, masters, and PhD programs. It contributes strongly to SDGs through education, research, governance and taking leadership roles through national and international collaborations.

The younger generations today are taking actions to hold others accountable and want to work in organizations with a purpose beyond profit, and thus creates pressure to set targets to combat climate change and utilize various tools to monitor and reduce environmental impacts in humanitarian action under the new global agreements.

Conclusion

Thammasat University scores 83.6 and ranks in the bracket of 101-200 of more than 1400 institutions in 2022, according to the Times Higher Education (THE)'s Impact Rankings that assesses universities against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The younger generations today are taking actions to hold others accountable and want to work in organizations with a purpose beyond profit[13], and thus creates pressure to set targets to combat climate change and utilize various tools[14] to monitor and reduce environmental impacts in humanitarian action under the new global agreements. ■

[12] https://sdgs.tu.ac.th/sustainablility-report/
[13] https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/pt/Documents/millennial-survey-21/2021-deloitte-global-millennial-survey-report.pdf
[14] https://phap.org/PHAP/Events/OEV2022/OEV220203.aspx

Environmental Accountability in Post-Pandemic Recovery, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Climate Change in Japan

*By **Sivapuram Venkata Rama Krishna Prabhakar,** Principal Policy Researcher, and **Nagisa Shiba,** Policy Researcher, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Japan*

Introduction

Japan is one of the industrialized countries where accountability is an important governance issue in public life and there are varied views on the extent to which accountability has developed. Despite these views, there is a reasonable agreement among peers that Japan has shown sizable leadership in environmental governance, environmental sustainability, environmental accountability, and sustainable consumption. This leadership is visible in multiple economic sectors. Leadership not just by the national governments but the governments at the sub-national level seem to lead the environmental causes. Environmental leadership and accountability efforts can be seen right from common people to civil society organizations, governments, and corporations. The environmental responsibility shown by many of these actors goes beyond the boundaries of Japan as the country promotes environmental sustainability in external assistance programs.

The eradication of Minamata disease and restoration of Minamata bay is often cited as an important success story of Japan's environmental leadership and environmental accountability. A multi-pronged approach with strong environmental accountability and transparency has encouraged the successful implementation of stringent environmental standards with the voluntary participation of industries, people and civil society organizations.

However, Minamata is not the last challenge that the country had to face. Japan is vulnerable to a range of natural disasters, climate change and more recently the pandemic where the country has shown its resolve in tackling these 'modern' challenges through a mixture of approaches that reflect the spirit shown in Minamata case. The difference between the Minamata and modern challenges is that the former is more localized while the latter is widespread.

Can Japan show the same resolve in ensuring environmental accountability in addressing the modern challenges it is facing? Can it reiterate its spirit of *kaizen* (continuous improvement) and *Ikegai* (life purpose) in addressing emerging challenges? These are some of the important questions to explore.

Environmental Accountability in Addressing Modern Challenges

Environmental accountability can be thought of in terms of five constituent elements, i.e. appropriate policies and institutions, public participation, monitoring and evaluation, transparency, and social and moral norms. The extent of development of these elements can vary across different issue areas the country is facing.

At the macro level, Japan's policy framework ensures environmental accountability. Japan's Basic Plan for Policy Evaluation of the Ministry of the Environment clearly states that environmental policies and their results should be explained to the public in an easy-to-understand manner, to ensure transparency in public administration and to fulfil environmental accountability (Ministry of Environment).

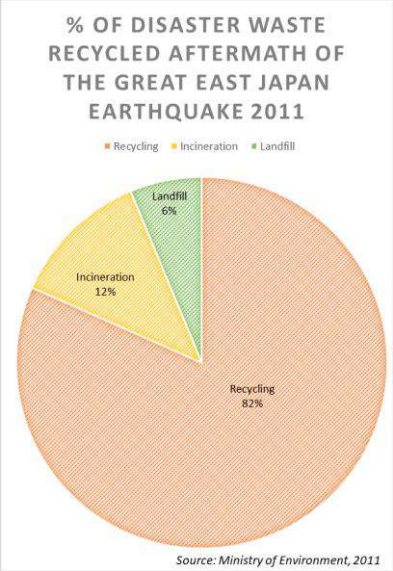
More recently, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused one of the most serious socio-economic disruptions in Japan. The estimated GDP loss from the pandemic was put at 4.7% in 2021. In contrast, the Kobe earthquake caused a GDP loss of 2% in 1995 (Dyomina and Mazitova). On the response front, the Government of Japan has called for a spirit of build-back better that encouraged firms to consider environmentally friendly measures wherever possible. Contrary to the Japanese work culture, many firms and offices encouraged working from home. Though necessitated by the infections, many believe that Japanese society has shown much more flexibility in this area than one would expect. Interestingly, building back better has spearheaded the Japanese response to disasters for decades. Japan applied the past lessons in planning for a better recovery from the pandemic. This ability to learn from the past is an important reflection of accountability. Japan also has called on all countries for a 'redesign' approach to ensure a sustainable recovery that is environmentally

responsible through three mutually reinforcing concepts of decentralized society, circular economy and decarbonized society (WRI; IGES). Japan has also called for transparency and accountability in the way international assistance is administered in the wake of the pandemic.

The disaster risk reduction work of Japan has provided notable models of environmental sustainability and accountability. The Great East Japan Earthquake has stimulated the prefectures and local governments to emphasize disaster resilient and environmentally friendly urban development in Japan. The emphasis on disaster-resilient infrastructure and resilient communities has increased in leaps and bounds after the earthquake. The UN recognition of the city of Sendai as a role model city for empowering people in 2012 is also a testament to accountability.

The management of a record 80-200 million tons of disaster waste posed major challenge aftermath of the earthquake which cost 3.2 billion USD to clear out. Through 'Disaster Waste Management Guidelines (2011)' the government emphasized recycling and reuse of disaster waste (Ministry of Environment). A record 82% of the waste was recycled which reduced the reconstruction costs considerably (See figure).

Efforts on environmental accountability concerning disaster risk reduction can be found at the sub-national level. In Hokkaido, for instance, the Municipal Accountability Promotion Plan for



Social Infrastructure Development establishes a mechanism for accountability for environment-related projects, including seismic upgrading of living infrastructure facilities such as water supply (Prefectural Government of Hokkaido).

Though Japan is highly vulnerable to typhoons and other climatic disasters, its work on climate change adaptation is advancing beyond GHG mitigation. Local governments took much more precedence in adaptation actions than the national government which subsequently took a facilitative role through creating online platforms (e.g. A-PLAT), information sharing and capacity building.

Accountability and transparency are relatively better developed within climate change mitigation than in adaptation - where measuring and reporting the progress is still at nascent stages. The GHG emission reporting by corporations and local governments had a greater headstart than adaptation. 'The Climate Change Adaptation Act (2018)' changes this as it sets the accountability for individual actors to take responsible actions. It obligates governments to formulate plans, implement measures in a timely fashion, and conduct monitoring and evaluation.

Under the Climate Change Adaptation Plan, the government has introduced a PDCA cycle for managing the progress of medium- and long-term climate change adaptation efforts every year. The Climate Change Adaptation Promotion Council consisting of relevant ministries and agencies checks the progress periodically (Cabinet Office). Businesses in particular are required to take actions to mitigate GHG emissions. Strengthening climate change governance can be attributed to the current pace of implementation in the country.

Conclusion

The authors believe that Japan has developed a strong policy and institutional framework, an important element of accountability, to strengthen governance in business sustainability, disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and pandemic management. However, the strength of development in other areas of accountability may not be at the same level as policies and institutions.

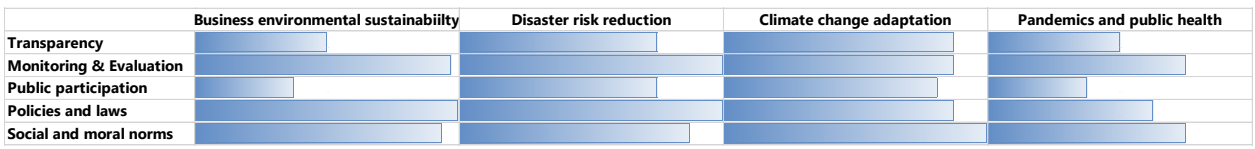


Figure 2: The strength of accountability in different issue areas. Source: Authors

Environmental accountability is also not uniformly developed across the range of issues that Japan is facing. Issues such as climate change are emerging and hence the environmental accountability in these areas can be said a 'work in progress.' In the area of pandemics, Japan is just making the beginning of environmental accountability. However, environmental actions and accountability are relatively well developed in manufacturing, corporate social responsibility, and in disaster management. Public participation in strengthening accountability is also an emerging area as the overall accountability framework is largely top-down in nature.

Through *kaizen*, Japan has given the concepts of 'build back better' and 'redesign' a meaning that many could easily associate it with, understand and adopt. This contribution itself provides a robust basis for the country to build environmental accountability into wider social sectors in the years to come.

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PARTNERSHIPS FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Accountability, the Environment and the Climate Emergency – a Conversation with Vani Catanasiga and Irfan Ullah

*By **Sherena Corfield,** Communications & Advocacy Manager, CHS Alliance, and **OWL RE team,** Geneva, Switzerland*

To debate how to make aid more accountable to those vulnerable to environmental changes and the climate crisis, Vani Catanasiga, Executive Director, Fiji Council of Social Services and Irfan Ullah, Researcher and Youth advocate, United Nations University exchange their views on the environmental findings from CHS Alliance's **2022 Humanitarian Accountability Report: Accountability is Non-Negotiable**.

Vani Catanasiga

Irfan Ullah

Q: What are your reactions to the highest-scoring environmental areas of the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality & Accountability?

VANI: Aid organisations must continue to advocate for using local solutions, such as indigenous housing, even if transitional; we need to be using more local and natural resources. That requires political will at national and regional level. We need all sectors – government, private sector and civil society – to move from rhetoric to action. If not, in settings like ours where we are already reeling from the impacts of climate change, humanitarian action will certainly do more harm.

IRFAN: I have seen that aid organisations are becoming more aware of bringing climate aspects into humanitarian and recovery activities. But I would agree with Vani that a systemic, long-term approach is missing; organisations are all carrying out different response activities but there is no common broader approach and thinking about long-term impacts. For example, a humanitarian actor may take flood reduction measures upstream but does not necessarily consider its impact on the communities living downstream. We need to have more synergies between organisations and build more partnerships. Tackling climate change is not a one-organisation responsibility; all the organisations need to come together to build links to address its long-term impacts.

Q. What are the key actions needed now for humanitarian organisations to improve their accountability on environmental issues and climate change?

VANI: We need to monitor carefully how our climate change adaption and humanitarian activities are being funded by donors. What are their priorities and where are they dedicating the funding – does it match our needs on the ground? If we are not careful, these may be funding "confusion" initiatives that are counterproductive to community resilience and undermine national solutions. This is what I saw in the Pacific with the COVID-19 and cyclone responses that happened simultaneously. Furthermore, in the Pacific, we are confronting the reality that some communities will have to move due to rising sea levels; in fact this is happening already. In these cases, we need to ensure that we are ac countable to these people who are "climate displaced". We need to make sure that, at a minimum, the principle of free, prior and informed consent is upheld and respected. Why? Because we are working in challenging contexts with multiple crisis, political instability and conflicts. For me, working in the Pacific humanitarian space, the solution is the CHS – t o require that regional and national frameworks that guide how humanitarian activities are conducted embed the Core Humanitarian Standard. How do we do that effectively in the region when the awareness of the CHS is minimal among both authorities and CSOs? That's the challenge for aid organisations going forward.

We need all sectors – government, private sector and civil society – to move from rhetoric to action. If not, in settings like ours where we are already reeling from the impacts of climate change, humanitarian action will certainly do more harm.

IRFAN: I think aid organisations should align their activities with the countries climate and disaster risk reduction policies. And consider how their activities can contribute to these policies. Building on Vani's point on funding, we need to see resources going to the local actors, the first responders, as this will support building their resilience and more adaptive capacity to face climate change. We need more transparency on funding and data availability, in addition to knowledge transfers between the global south and north. Youth are also seen as the victims of crisis but they are often the first responders and also very active in recovery. Keeping in mind the growing number of youth in developing countries, it's a resource that has to be engaged – not an "if" but "how". Having youth involved will only build a more effective response and adaptability to the challenges of climate change and other environmental issues. After all, they are the ones who will face the future fall-out.

This conversation is an extract from the CHS Alliance's 2022 Humanitarian Accountability Report: Accountability is Non-Negotiable. For more on the report visit: https://www.chsalliance.org/har2022. ■

Building Back Greener: Environmental Accountability in the Post-Pandemic Context

*An Iconoclastic Comment by **Ben Wisner**, Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction, University College London, UK,*

Building Back

Covid-19 left many people unemployed, fragile livelihoods even more at risk, and governments with debt and reduced capacity. Thus there is no doubt that some "building back" is required. But "back" to what? I would argue that "building back" should focus on people's livelihoods and social networks rather than on reproducing the whole consumerist and undemocratic systems. Accountable and capable governance will only emerge from vigorous engagement by ordinary people and their social movements, trade unions, cooperatives and other non-governmental organizations. However, to engage and participate in a transformative manner, people need health, time and energy. Without strongly anchored livelihoods that provide a buffer and some surplus, good health, time and energy will not be there.

Building Back Greener

"Green" growth is still growth. Growth is the problem, not the solution. Production for need as opposed to profit could balance non-wasteful, mindful consumption. Paraphrasing Gandhi: "There is enough for everyone's need, not anyone's greed." A life of abundance is possible without perpetual growth. Basic human needs are definable: food, water, shelter, health care. Beyond these, lifelong education, leisure, conviviality and community are also necessary to achieve quality of life. Freedom from violence, oppression and exploitation is also fundamental. Needs, rights, need-fulfilling activities and the means of achieving and protecting those rights must be in focus and balanced.

Accountable and capable governance will only emerge from vigorous engagement by ordinary people and their social movements, trade unions, cooperatives and other non-governmental organizations.

Accountability

Who is accountable to whom, and what does accountability imply? Who sets the standards that define "environmental accountability"? Should these standards be minimal in relation to present-day economic and political conditions including the aftermath of the covid pandemic, or should they be aspirational? If an actor fails to meet whatever criterion, are there sanctions or negative results that would nudge that actor to meet the criterion next time? Is this a matter of social norms and expectations or should government be involved?

Is it possible to have environmental accountability without social accountability? Coming back to the post-pandemic situation of the billions that live lives of risk and precarity, those that create risk need to be held accountable. International banks and construction companies that build megaprojects such as dams and luxury high rise apartment blocks that displace people and degrade ecosystems should be held responsible for creating risk. It is not enough to urge governments to "reduce risk" using the UN's rhetoric of "disaster risk reduction." Some of these very governments are complicit in the creation of risk by failing to regulate or even to prohibit megaprojects.

Sentiment versus Sound Policy

"Building Back Greener: Environmental Accountability in the Post-Pandemic Context" is a virtuous and compelling sentiment. It is a rallying cry. But sentiment runs the risk of decaying rapidly into leaden sentimentality (the glow of a radioactive isotope is short-lived). Hard-headed policy is required, followed by decisive action. However, in a democracy policy has to emerge in a process that engages the knowledge, skill and experience of ordinary people. To be able to engage with mobilizers, planners and officials, people need strong livelihoods. People must have health, free time and energy. "Building From Below" is therefore a prerequisite to "Building Back Greener". ■

Green Accountability: A View from Affected Women

*By **Malashree Bhargava,** Disaster Risk Reduction Consultant, UN Women Regional Office for Asia-Pacific, Thailand*

The "COVID-19 pandemic has erased decades of progress towards gender equality".

- UN Secretary General

(SG statement 3 March 2021. Women's Lives Upended, Rights Eroded amid COVID-19, Secretary-General Says in Message for International Day, Warning Impact Will Outlast Pandemic | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases (un.org))

Current Context

The COVID-19 pandemic compounded by climate change-induced disasters in Asia-Pacific created a complex riskscape.[15] It exacerbated pre-existing gender discrimination and inequalities unleashing wide-ranging and multidimensional negative impacts on women and girls. Lingering issues remain around employment, loss of livelihoods, food hardship, and increased unpaid workloads, among others.[16] 84% of women lost jobs and didn't receive unemployment benefits or government support.[17] More women spent time on water and fuel collection, reducing their time available for paid work, education, or rest.[18] The pandemic led to an exponential increase in sexual and gender-based violence.[19] 400 million women of reproductive age were anemic before the COVID-19 crisis.[20] The pandemic heightened this food insecurity, risk of hunger, and malnutrition amongst women and children.[21] [22] &[23] Disaster-related food insecurity in the region leads to transactional sex, human trafficking, exploitation, debt bondage, child and forced labor, and forced marriage of women and girls.[24&25] Before COVID -19, 15 million girls were out-of-school in East Asia and the Pacific.[26] Due to COVID-19, in South Asia alone, the probable risks and impacts resulting from 4.5 million girls dropping out of school include approximately 400,000 adolescent pregnancies, which can hinder girls' return to school.[27] Women and girls constitute the majority of the poor in Asia-Pacific, with minimal land ownership and productive

[15] UNESCAP (2021) Resilience in a Riskier World Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2021: https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/Asia-Pacific%20Disaster%20Report%202021_full%20version_0.pdf

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resources.[28] Climate change negatively impacts women's livelihoods in the region, which relies on agriculture and small-scale fisheries for survival. At the same time, women also play a crucial role in mitigating and adapting to climate change. They are also responsible for collecting water and fuel.[29] [30] Annually, an estimated 22.7 million people, the majority of whom are women and children, are being displaced by climate-related events.[31] Women smallholder farmers and fishers tend to have less adaptive capacity to cope with climate change and disasters. Women, particularly those from landless and land-poor households, use forests for survival by collecting short-gestation products such as firewood, fodder, food items, and other non-timber products (due to their roles in cooking, cattle care, supplementing household nutrition, and related tasks).[32] The role of CSOs remains crucial to reach out to, voice, and empower the most vulnerable women and girls in this context and recovery phase.

Green Accountability Framework for CSOs

CSO's work should be guided by the legally binding international treaty Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). It's General Recommendation 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of DRR in the context of climate change that explicitly links environment, disasters, pandemics, and women's empowerment in an actionable way. The post-2015 Agenda for sustainable development firmly establish intrinsic linkages between SDG 5 on Gender Equality and the achievement of all other SDGs and DRR frameworks (e.g., Paris Agreement, SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, Glasgow Climate Pact, Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development and New Urban Agenda). Agreed conclusions from the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66) Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental and disaster risk reduction policies recognize the importance of having an open, inclusive, and transparent engagement with civil society in the implementation of measures on women's empowerment. These frameworks and commitments guide the ongoing work of the CSOs in the regional, national, and local DRR platforms to tackle structural gender inequalities and promote women's role as agents of change in DRR.

Climate change negatively impacts women's livelihoods in the region, which relies on agriculture and small-scale fisheries for survival. At the same time, women also play a crucial role in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction calls for integrating gender, age, disability, and cultural perspectives into all policies and practices and promoting women's leadership. It recognizes that empowering women and persons with a disability to publicly lead and promote gender-equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction is key for effectively managing disaster risk and designing, resourcing, and implementing gender-sensitive DRR policies, plans, and programs.

Sendai Framework Priority 1 - Understanding the gender dimensions of disaster risk

CSOs should ensure meaningful inclusion of women and girls from marginalized groups and their representatives, e.g., women-led organizations and women's groups, in collecting and analyzing disaggregated risk and impact data. Facilitate women-led CSOs to conduct gender analysis and advocate for the integration of gender analysis to inform Eco-based

[28] UN Women (2018) Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific: https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/-/media/field%20office%20eseasia/docs/publications/2018/10/apsdg-report_web-28aug2018.pdf?la=en&vs=4304

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DRR policies, strategies, plans, and assessments.

Sendai Priority 2: Strengthening gender-responsive risk governance

Women's participation in environmental decision-making is essential for advancing gender equality and environmental and DRR action. CSOs should support the governments in designing and implementing Sendai Framework Target E, primarily Target E.2 – Local plans and strategies for DRR to address the vulnerabilities of the communities, especially women and girls. To this end, impact-level, gender-responsive community-based Eco-DRR, and resilience should be advocated as raison d'etre for all national and local action planning. CSOs should advocate and promote the gender balance in leadership, senior decision-making roles, and representation at all levels of DRR / resilience government structures - national and local mechanisms for disaster risk reduction and resilience. CSOs can support governments to assess / enact / revise national and local level DRR / environment/resilience laws, policies, strategies, and plans that are non-discriminatory, gender-responsive and inclusive, and informed by gender data / analysis and aligned with CEDAW General Recommendation 37. CSOs can also support the government in creating mechanisms to track gender-responsive implementation of national and subnational DRR frameworks and involve boys and men in gender-sensitization and gender-responsive DRR planning and execution.

Sendai Framework Priority 3 – Investing in DRR

Funding for gender equality, primarily through grassroots organizations, is critical to reaching the last mile to address the specific needs and risks women and girls face. A UN Women-led survey on Closing the Funding Gap for Women-Focused Organizations Responding to COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific revealed that as of mid-July 2020, there was no direct donor contribution to local women's rights organizations (WROs) through the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan in Asia-Pacific.[33] For instance, WROs in Bangladesh reported that they are largely absent from COVID-19 planning and response efforts. The absence of these critical voices prevented identifying and meaningfully addressing the needs of and reaching the most vulnerable women and girls in remote communities. It requires proactively addressing the power imbalance between grassroots WROs and big NGOs, INGOs, and donors by, for example, developing the grassroots WROs' capacity in negotiation and communication skills and project management.[34] International and national CSOs should also secure funding for women's organizations (national and grassroots) to meaningfully participate in gender-responsive DRR and climate change. CSOs should help generate evidence and advocate to increase investments, including line ministry budget allocations and expenditure frameworks, especially for gender-responsive livelihoods, financial inclusion, social protection, and infrastructure and services.

Sendai Framework Priority 4: Progress in gender-responsive disaster preparedness for effective response and to 'build back better in recovery and rehabilitation, and reconstruction

Develop programs to ensure the participation of and leadership by women in political life, and women's organizations, at various levels, in the context of local and community planning and climate change and disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. CSOs can also support the governments in developing and monitoring socio-economic indicators for early warning-early action to assess impacts on high-risk groups. CSOs can advocate for integrating priorities, needs, and capacity development requirements identified by vulnerable women and girls into preparedness planning and budgets. CSOs can support the government's capacity to translate risk information, early warning, and early action messages into simple, implementable actions for women, children, and other high-risk groups, especially those living in remote areas. They can also support design, implementation, and evaluation to ensure gender-responsive and inclusive risk forecasting, communications, preparedness, plans, and early warning and action. CSOs can strengthen coordination between women groups, disaster agencies, and women's ministries. CSOs should support the integration of gender, social inclusion, and eco-feminism approaches across post-disaster needs assessments, recovery processes, coordination mechanisms, strategies, plans, and budgets to respond to women's priorities and needs. ■

[33] UN Women (2020) Closing the Funding Gap for Women-Focused Organizations Responding to COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific: https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20ESEAsia/Docs/Publications/2020/08/GiHA%20Gender%20and%20Funding%20in%20COVID-19.pdf

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Uses of Satellite Imagery in DRR and Building Back Greener: The ADRC Experience

By ***Gerry Potutan,*** *Senior Researcher, Asian Disaster Reduction Center, Japan*

Impacts of natural disasters are often seen in terms of the number of people killed or injured, number of people affected, and economic losses. What's often unseen is its impacts on the environment that further aggravate those seen impacts. In the case of the super typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines (2014) for instance, more than 40 million coconut trees were damaged and many coral reef areas were wiped out, taking huge toll on the environment and the ecosystem services.[35] It made the response and recovery efforts more complex. If environmental impacts are left unattended, it poses concern since degrading ecosystems represent a major driver of disaster risk (e.g., floods and landslides). During this past two years, there has been a challenge of monitoring and assessing the environmental impacts of natural disasters, especially in the affected areas, due to travel restrictions and border closures brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is in this context that remote sensing satellite imagery plays an important role.

As one of the key actors in promoting Sentinel Asia (an initiative to apply space-based technology and WEB-GIS technology to support disaster risk management activity in the Asia-Pacific region, Figure 1), the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC) provides its member countries with earth observation satellite data, particularly "before-and-after"

Figure 1. Basic Concept of Sentinel Asia (Sentinel Asia, 2022).

[35] OCHA, "Philippines Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda Environmental Assessment: Final Report and Recommendations", https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/philippines-typhoon-haiyanyolanda-environmental-assessment-final-report-and (Accessed on 28 September 2022).

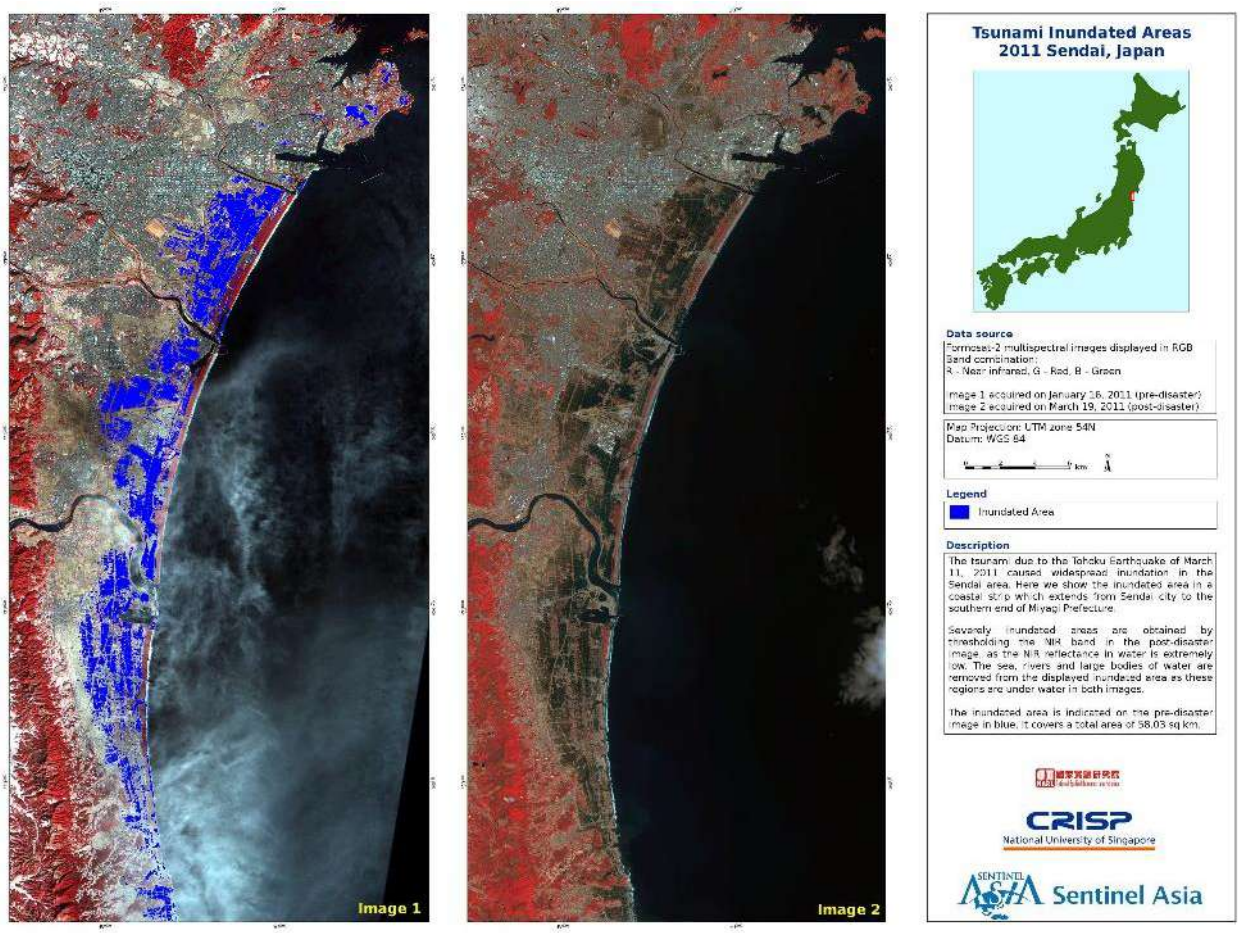

Figure 2. Before-and-After Satellite Images in Sendai, Japan following the Great East Japan Earthquake (Sentinel Asia, 2022).

satellite images of disaster-impacted areas.[36]

Based on the ADRC experience, there are many ways of how remote sensing satellite imagery can be used as tool for environmental accountability in the context of disaster risk management. During pre-disaster, satellite imagery can be used to monitor and greater understand the hazards, such as drought, snow cover, and wildfire. Though difficult to measure quantitatively, the imagery data can provide an insight about the level of "green infrastructure" in the area by showing what range of ecosystem services (such as water purification, air quality, or space for recreation) are present.

During disaster, high-resolution satellite imagery data can provide an immediate estimation of damage assessment as well as inform the decisions for emergency management and response, such as relief and evacuation efforts. During post-disaster, the "before-and-after" satellite imagery of disaster-impacted areas can effectively guide the development of reconstruction and recovery plan. In the case of the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, the before-and-after satellite imagery of the impacted areas of Sendai shows the extent of damage in inundated areas on infrastructure, livelihoods, and surrounding environment (Figure 2).[37]

In the context of Sentinel Asia, satellite imageries are incorporated with GIS (Geographic Information System) providing better opportunity for more detailed and practical DRR planning. So, with satellite imagery in remote sensing, DRR planners and practitioners can better understand the crucial components of disaster risk management in relation to the ecosystems as well as contribute in building back greener. ■

[36] Sentinel Asia, "About Sentinel Asia", https://sentinel-asia.org/aboutsa/AboutSA.html (Accessed on 28 September 2022).
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