Climate & Development Knowledge Network

INDIA

COUNTRY SNAPSHOT

March 2013

News from CDKN: Showcasing Green Growth Leadership at 13th DSDS

India has much to teach, as well as learn from, other countries in Asia about how to achieve growth that is both 'green' and reduces poverty. CDKN has recently documented one best practice that other Governments should consider in our 'Inside Story' on India's Perform, Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme. [Please send us your feedback on whether you consider this scheme has the potential to deliver real results.] The scheme was one of many initiatives that were shared during a CDKN and Asia LEDS Partnership hosted session at the 13th Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS), 31 Jan - 2 Feb 2013. The theme of the Summit was resource efficient and low carbon growth. The 'open session' titled 'Learning from Green Growth Initiatives in Asia' allowed policy-makers and practitioners from India, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam to share their best practices. CDKN also shared some of our own 'stories of change' related to green growth in a Special DSDS Edition Newsletter.

Highlights of Recent Impact

- CDKN has six excellent and innovative research projects underway in India looking at the integration of climate change and DRR, and using the policy-making process to deliver change. The **group of research partners was recently convened for an informal 'networking and learning event'** in Delhi. CDKN will use the discussion as inputs to designing its action and learning hub on DRR, which aims to dig deeper into tackling the underlying institutional, policy and other constraints to strengthening resilience through climate related DRM, and scaling up some of our innovations.
- CDKN's long-held ambition to **strengthen the capacity of think-tanks** to influence and strengthen the CCD policy-making process took a major step forward in February. A day-long meeting was held in Delhi of key players (IDRC, START, SUMERNET/SEI, GDN, WRI, SANDEE, TERI, LEAD, GIZ) who share this objective. This was the first time the group had met, and many were unaware of the relevant work being done by others. The meeting helped map on-going initiatives and options for collaborative action. A core group will meet to decide on how to take this forward.

How we provide support in India

Through technical assistance and research which promotes innovation on climate compatible development at the State level. In particular, supporting States to prepare for implementation on the State Climate Change Action Plans.

Total budget committed to date: approximately GBP 1.5 million

CDKN Partners in India:

Story of Change: Taking Heat Seriously

Ahmadabad, Gujarat has a population of around 7.2 million people and its urban sprawl is growing every year. Its average daily temperatures in summer are 45°C, but in 2010 a heat wave that lasted four months saw temperatures reach 50°C and killed 100 people. This type of extreme heat is becoming a health disaster, and a CDKN research project underway is supporting the State and city authorities to tackle it. The project, 'Climate Change: Addressing Heat-Health Vulnerability in Rapidly Urbanising Regions of Western India', is being implemented by the Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC) together with the Indian Institute of Public Health and Public Health Foundation of India.

Since March 2012 the project team have been identifying vulnerable populations and making the case that disaster risk reduction measures are needed to protect them. Ahmadabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) are now so convinced of the need for action that they are developing a Heat Action Plan which will be launched in April 2013. Commissioner Dr. Mohapatra at a recent Action Plan Steering Meeting stressed their commitment to design and budget for activities that will protect the vulnerable: *"Our primary duty is to provide relief and comfort to the citizens when faced with an onslaught from nature."*

As a result of the capacity building and communication elements of the project, health professionals are also now aware of the risks of extreme heat. For example, following a March 2012 workshop, one professional committed to take forward the message: *"We will motivate our patients toward this cause…[and] educate them about the heat waves."*

Ahmedabad's Smt. Shardaben General Hospital had already converted its black tar roof to a china-tiled mosaic (see top picture). They also now move the maternity ward from the top to the ground floor during the summer to reduce the exposure to temperatures for vulnerable newborns and new mothers. Doctors have observed lower infant mortality rates after these changes. Roughly one-eighth of the 64 urban health centres have now received china mosaic roofs.

"My sincere accolades for coming out with a heat health brief, highly relevant from population health perspective. Heat stroke is looming up as a defiant public health challenge across many states including my own, Odisha."

"This is a very interesting paper. The insights from the survey will definitely inform policy and provide a push for additional services to protect slum communities."

Feedback from expert external reviews of policy briefs on priority sectors.

Update of CDKN Projects in India

Sheltering from a gathering storm (April 2012 – March 2014)

ISET is putting a spotlight on the importance of climate-adapted shelter design. This research project is using economics, and a cost-benefit analysis of both Indian and Vietnamese contexts, to get communities, building professionals and policy makers motivated on the issue. However, they are going beyond quantitative assessments, and also involving communities through a participatory process of identifying costs and benefits of construction options.

Design competitions will soon also get architects involved in looking at new options for low-cost, climate resilient structures. A supporting enabling environment for the large-scale adoption of such shelter is essential, and through shared-learning dialogues and other mechanisms, the team are facilitating policy-makers to envision and design incentives for such types of shelter.

The project is soon to be expanded to put more consideration into appropriate design for extreme heat, as well as look at appropriate shelter for communities in Pakistan.

Multi-Stakeholder Action to Mainstream DRR and Climate Adaptation (July 2012-Aug 2013)

This research project by SEEDS, Kyoto University and IIT is getting new approaches for managing disaster risk at the State level integrated into the decision-making process. For example, Leh is one of the largest, remotest and most heavily militarized districts of India. The project found that the Disaster Management plan, created following tragic 2010 floods focuses only on relief, rather than risk management. The District Government approved a revision to the plan, but officials lacked the capacity to carry it out.

SEEDS conducted a district level workshop of local stakeholders to identify the gaps in current policy, followed by a household data collection exercise to get evidence of current vulnerability and adaptive capacity. Ten village level resource maps, and action plans, were then combined into a local plan for Sakti area. This model of how to develop a plan has been welcomed by local councillors, and discussions are now underway for how to scale-it up for the district.

Visit the CDKN website to see a beautiful photo display of the project's sites in Leh.

South Asia Climate Change Award Fellows Programme – Panos South Asia is about to start the second year of the CDKN supported South Asia Climate Change Award (SACCA) Fellowships. By enhancing journalists' capacity and editors' understanding, the project ultimately aims to improve coverage of climate change and so increase public awareness and debate on these issues. The programme has set up an active online platform http://climatechange.panossouthasia.org which features around 110 stories from the fellows and had more than 28,000 views. One such story is from Vaishnavi Chandrashekhar writing in the *Times of India* on what Mumbai can learn from Hurricane Sandy.

Visit the CDKN and Panos websites for details of how print, television, radio and web journalists writing/reporting on climate change and environment issues from South Asia can apply for the 2013 fellowship.

Overcoming hurdles to green construction in India

by Kriti Nagrath of the Development Alternatives Group

Construction is a sector that is keenly impacted by climate change – it is also a sector that contributes substantially to climate change. It is important to shift the focus of construction policy and practice towards resource efficiency and disaster resilience. However, promotion of alternative construction technologies in India faces a number of issues:

Technical capacity building and awareness – While alternate technologies have long been around, they are yet to break market barriers and be mainstreamed in construction practice. Most developers and home builders have not heard of them and are unwilling to deviate from conventional technologies. Overcoming this barrier requires skills development and awareness generation. The benefits of alternate materials and technologies, such as resource and energy efficiency, need to be conveyed to end users. Updating building codes to include alternate technologies will also go a long way in increasing their acceptance.

Assessments for decision making – There is little quantification of the benefits of alternative technologies and thus the advantages are vague and subject to speculation. Tools and software are available for this, and can greatly aid the design process. Assessing impact on energy consumption and carbon and water intensities, for example, can be used as indicators to decide the most appropriate material and technology choices.

Government bureaucracy – Government teams responsible for reviewing building plans often do not consist of technical experts, leading to inaccurate or incomplete assessments. Building the capacities of government officers is needed to ensure alternate projects see the light of day, along with building transparency and accountability around approval processes.

Norms for operation - The transition to a low carbon pathway is not just a function of technology and design, but is dependent upon behaviour change among all stakeholders especially user communities. Passive design strategies will have their full impact on energy savings only when occupants follow the norms for optimizing them. Guidelines should be provided for this.

A concerted effort which crosses the public and private divide and engages with the real issues preventing the widespread adoption of these technologies is needed. The potential impact is huge and we all have an incentive to make progress.

For the full version of this article, visit www.cdkn.org/regions/asia/

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What is the Climate and Development Knowledge Network?

CDKN is an alliance of six private and non-governmental organisations operating across four continents. The network provides support to decision makers in developing countries to design and deliver climate compatible development. We do this by combining research, advisory services and knowledge management, in support of locally owned and managed policy processes. We work in partnership with decision-makers in the public, private and non-governmental sectors.

For further information please visit our website www.cdkn.org or e-mail us at asia@cdkn.org