



### News from CDKN: Leadership on Climate Compatible Development in Cities

Across the world CDKN is working with ambitious city Governments to build the resilience of citizens and the economy, from Cartagena in Colombia to Hue in Vietnam. Indian cities are now part of this network with new ideas and approaches to urban climate compatible development (CCD) being tested across the country. Many of our partners involved participated in a [CDKN panel and side-event](#) at the global Resilient Cities Congress in June, including those who are tackling extreme heat in Ahmedabad (see below).

One key issue for CDKN in India is how to devolve State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs) further downwards, to cities and districts where responsibility for implementation on many issues actually rests. In this regard, CDKN has launched a partnership with the 'Future Proofing Cities' approach run by Atkins, UCL and local partners to assess the risks (both hazards and carbon intensity risks) faced by Bangalore and Madurai and put in place mitigation measures. CDKN hopes to build alliances with other networks and actors working on urban issues in India to build our own expertise. CDKN's Project Manager in India, Elizabeth Colebourn, reflects on some common challenges we face in this area in an article titled ["Who will deliver our vision of an Indian green city"](#)

### Highlights of Recent Impact

- On the back of a heat wave in 2010 which claimed hundreds of lives, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) in partnership with an international coalition of health and academic groups and with CDKN support, has developed the **Ahmedabad Heat Action Plan**. Aimed at increasing awareness, sharing information and coordinating responses in order to reduce the health effects of heat on vulnerable populations, the action plan is the first comprehensive plan of its kind in India.
- The **CDKN/Panos South Asia annual fellowship** is putting the issue of climate change on the agenda of politicians and bureaucrats. This year's batch includes 8 journalists from Indian media outlets ranging from the Financial Express to Malayalam-language Kairali TV. George Thomas from last year's batch illustrates the impact this fellowship can have: *"As Kerala state was facing a drought this summer, thanks to the fellowship I could do a series of editorials on the subject for MalayalaManorama. These editorials had a strong impact with the policy makers and the readers. The Kerala Government announced measures to protect farmers from drought through crop loss and effective action to reach water to them."*

### 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, and through innovative DRR approaches.

Total budget committed to date: approximately GBP 2.5 million

### CDKN Partners in India:



# Story of Change: Tackling the Silent Disasters

Last month CDKN's research partner SEEDS India heard about a winter disaster in Leh and thousands of sheep dying. The area is in the region where SEEDS is implementing a CDKN-START supported project promoting effective climate related disaster risk management (DRM) in the state and district.

The high altitude plains of Changthang, Eastern Ladakh are snowbound and cut off from the rest of the world throughout the winters. Contacts in Leh confirmed that there was something very wrong.

The research team decided to investigate more and sent out a mission to Changthang. This is what they found: A silent disaster

([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-d\\_cq4kr2Q4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-d_cq4kr2Q4)).

The nomadic tribe called the Changpas who live in these plains have for generations lived in harmony with the land. The Changpas rear yaks, horses and sheep, in addition to their famous changra 'pashmina' goats. Over the three months between mid-December and mid-March, there were four major heavy snow falls; a record for the region. In fact, it snowed consecutively between January 18th and February 3rd. The winter pastures were totally covered with blankets of snow.

January and February are the key months both for pashmina hair growth and birthing. Starvation meant that almost 90% of the young goats and sheep were stillborn or died. Around 40,000 livestock (goats and sheep) have perished, as well as several hundred horses, yaks and other wild mammals.

The research had to take a back-seat when the community focused on survival, and CDKN and partners tried to raise attention on this issue, and come out with an appeal for action. SEEDS is urging government and aid agencies to awaken to such silent disasters induced by climate change. Earlier this year IFRC raised a flag that over 90 percent of the world's disasters go unreported. Climate induced small scale disasters in remote areas are certainly the most ignored. SEEDS is now using the CDKN-START research platform to dig deeper into this matter.



*“Over these 3 winter months, we have lived through extreme difficulties, no less than a nightmare. At times we feared for our own lives and there was little we could do for our livestock. There was little fuel wood and dung, as most of it had got wet... I have never witnessed such a harsh winter in all my life.” – Meme Urgain Tuktsa, 73 years old and herder in Korzok*



*“I was back in Tegajung on school vacation. It was the first time I had ever seen such a big snow. We never used to sleep but just kept cleaning the snow from the corrals. Yet, in the end we had no food to give them and around 50-60 of our sheep and goats died” – Chimit Tolkar, 16 years old student at the Nomadic Residential School, Puga*

**Shubh Kal: From information to knowledge and action** (Jan 2012 – Aug 2013) –

Development Alternatives (DA) is promoting the use of community radio as a means of getting research on climate change and knowledge on adaptation practices down to the field where action has to take place. They have tested their approach in Bundelkhand with an intense capacity building programme for local journalists, and produced a [climate change guide](#) for community radio reporters. There are 5 local radio stations who are now producing a range of programmes about climate change. They are also connecting with local policy-makers and agencies, such as the Krishi Vigyan Centre, to improve the quality of their reports.

Through this project DA is also convincing the experts to think about how they communicate research. For example, in an article for the Indian Research Journal of Extension Education they discuss how the effectiveness of seasonal forecast information as a tool in improving farm level decision making depends on how the information is transmitted.



**Promoting gender responsive and inclusive action on climate change** (Feb 2012 – Dec 2012)

Alternative Futures is putting the spotlight on the gender dimension of the state action plans on climate change, and has had significant success in the four states they are working in. In Madhya Pradesh the Government requested Aditi Kapoor who is leading the project to publish her briefing note advising the Government on how adaptation-focused plans, programmes and schemes can be made more gender-responsive, in their soon to be published Government publication. During a policy roundtable in Uttarakhand, together with local partner CHEA, the focal officer for climate change requested the team to contribute to a separate and dedicated chapter on gender in the state's action plan.

CDKN is now hoping to get wider attention on this issue and has commissioned a short documentary from EarthCare that will give vulnerable women themselves the opportunity to tell their story.



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

Provision of shelter following disasters is one of the largest recurrent cost for governments and relief organizations, and the failure of shelters to protect people from hazards is a significant risk. ISET is filling the information gap with regards to the economic and other costs or benefits of investing in resilient shelter. India, together with Pakistan and Vietnam, are case studies in this project. A *Review of Housing Vulnerability: Implications for Climate Resilient Houses* has been produced, as well as well as a [technical](#), and [policy](#), brief on 'Extreme Rainfall, Climate Change and Flooding in Gorakhpur -their pilot district.



# The road ahead for State Actions on Climate Change in India

by Sunder Subramanian, LEAD India fellow and independent consultant

Given that the impacts of climate change in India will vary across states, sectors, locations, and populations, there can be no 'one-size-fits-all' climate change strategy. As such, all States have been asked to prepare State Action Plans for Climate Change (SAPCCs) in line with the NAPCC. The States are acting as the focal point for the country's climate change response in their respective geographic area. Therefore, in India, making progress on climate compatible development requires working hand in hand with the State Governments.

The SAPCC process has had and continues to have its share of challenges. There is great variety in the relative overall importance placed on climate change and the SAPCC processes between different states. The selection/nomination of the nodal agency at the State level to anchor the SAPCC process has also been problematic. Because the nodal agency for the NAPCC at the Central level is the MoEF, many states have automatically nominated their Forest Department (FD) as the lead anchoring agency at the State level. However, this *automatic choice* is not necessarily the *best choice* in many cases.

The choice works fine in States that have significant forest cover (and therefore where the State FD is relatively more important in the overall scheme of things in the state's administration and governance) or where the FD has been exceptionally proactive in coordinating the entire process. Yet in others, it has proved to be a poor choice – the SAPCC process is necessarily multi-sectoral, spanning the work of many state department, sectors, and agencies. Thus where the FD is not relatively strong or proactive enough to drive the required coordination and convergence processes, the SAPCC processes have either floundered or have been considerably slow.

Even where the SAPCCs have been completed, approved, and recommended to the Planning Commission of India for financial backing/budgetary support, States also face significant and multiple challenges in implementation.

- Many States do not yet have detailed climate vulnerability analyses available at the State level (both in general and for various sectors),
- Awareness, and capacities in the States on climate change and its potential impacts are still minimal at best.
- State specific climate research and evidence building including time series data mechanisms are absent in many states, and very little documenting of community voices and perceptions of climate change and its impacts has been carried out.
- Significant and sustained financial resources will need to be found to implement many of the large-scale adaptation measures that are needed, such as retrofitting core infrastructure assets that are at risk from extreme weather events;
- Based on vulnerabilities and risks, sectoral priorities, and programmes will need re-alignment as well as recognising and classifying existing action that it is already building adaptive capacity and supporting mitigation as part of the climate change agenda.

This is an edited version of an article available on [www.cdkn.org/regions/asia/](http://www.cdkn.org/regions/asia/)

## What is the Climate 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.

Photo Credits: Pg 2: Changthang Emergency Response Group

In India CDKN is housed in LEAD India. For more information contact Elizabeth Colebourn, LEAD India, C-87, GK-1, New Delhi. [Elizabeth.colebourn@cdkn.org](mailto:Elizabeth.colebourn@cdkn.org)

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