



## SESSION DESCRIPTION

# G1 Establishing an Urban Resilience Research Agenda

## Panel discussion – In “Talk-show” format

**Date:** Wednesday, 10 June 2015

**Time:** 11:00-12:30

**Rooms:** S25-26

**Language:** English

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**Organized by:** CDKN/ODI

### OBJECTIVE

A recent review of research on urban resilience found that a substantial majority of articles on the subject were published after 2010, underlining the fact that this is still a fledgling area of research. Like most new areas, the research pulls in different directions, suffers from internal contradictions and has been criticized for being too concerned with theory instead of practical application.

Along with this growth in research, the attention of the international donor community is increasingly turning to towns and cities, which generate 80% of the world's GDP and are home to a majority of the world's population. At the same time, urban areas are disproportionately located in areas exposed to disasters and climate change such as rivers and coasts, resulting in a high degree of risk and vulnerability.

This is why major international donors such as the Rockefeller Foundation, USAID, DFID and the Asian Development Bank are investing substantial resources in programmes and policies to build urban resilience. At times, the question of urban resilience is framed purely in terms of infrastructure at the cost of adequately understanding how people, rights and wellbeing play a role. There is therefore a clear need to inform burgeoning programmes and policies with insights from rigorous research whilst also ensuring that any research taking place is in touch with the ground realities of building urban resilience.

At this early stage, the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) aims to seize the opportunity for aligning this burgeoning body of study and investigation with growing practice by establishing a cohesive research agenda on urban resilience.

Through insights gathered from the guest panellists who have worked on implementing urban resilience programmes, undertaken major research projects on the subject and influenced international policy processes, this session consolidated key future directions of research in this domain.

### OUTCOMES

As a result of this panel, the audience got a clear idea of the state of research on urban resilience as well as the conceptual and practical gaps that need to be bridged in order for it to inform policies and programmes. Overall, this session hoped to deploy the insights of the panellists (who have been carefully selected as they bridge research, practice and policy making) to suggest a research agenda on urban resilience.



## METHODOLOGY

- This session followed a highly interactive ‘talk show’ approach.
- The facilitator opened by outlining the objectives of the session, enumerating the guiding questions and introducing key ideas. **(10 minutes)**
- An interactive discussion followed with the four panelists asking them to reflect on various aspects of the debate. **(40 minutes)**
- Following this, questions were invited from the audience. These questions were addressed to the facilitator who then decided which panelist should field them, with a possibility of multiple panelists being asked to reflect on the same question. **(15 minutes)**
- In conclusion, each panelist was given 5 minutes to outline 2-3 important gaps in knowledge and suggest 2-3 key future directions for research on urban resilience. **(15 minutes)** Finally, the facilitator summarized the key points made and present the highlights of a ‘research agenda for urban resilience’. **(10 minutes)**

### Guiding questions:

1. What directions should future research on urban resilience take in order to enhance the ability of urban areas to successfully engage with diverse shocks and stresses?
2. To what extent is the current body of research on urban resilience useful for informing policies and programs?
3. In what ways can practical insights from implementing urban resilience programs inform the body of research and knowledge on the subject?

## CONTRIBUTORS

Facilitator      Cynthia Rosenzweig, Senior Research Scientist and Head of the Climate Impacts Group, NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies; Co-Director, Urban Climate Change Research Network, Columbia University, New York, USA

Panelist          *Richard Friend, Senior Scientist, ISET, Bangkok, Thailand*

Richard Friend has helped deliver the Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network initiative, the Mekong-Building Resilience to Climate Change in Asian Cities Asia, the Urban Climate Resilience in Southeast Asia program, and plays a lead role in the Reimagining Inclusive Urban Futures for Transformation partnership. He will present insights from practice that hold relevance for research and will host the ‘talk show’ session.

Panelist          *Cassidy Johnson, Development Planning Unit, University College London, UK*

Cassidy Johnson is an internationally renowned expert on urban resilience and has led a number of large research projects on the subject across the developing world. She will present her thoughts on opportunities and challenges for research on urban resilience.

Panelist          *Anna Sjödin, Technical Services and Property Management Department, City of Karlstad, Sweden*

Anna Sjödin works with the City of Karlstad, Sweden and has helped implement a globally recognized resilience initiative in the city. She will talk about the knowledge needs of practitioners.



Panelist

*Aditya Bahadur, Senior Research Officer, Overseas Development Institute, London, UK*

Aditya Bahadur is a Senior Research Officer at the Overseas Development Institute and serves as co-lead of CDKN's research portfolio on urbanization and development. He has undertaken a high-resolution empirical analysis of the politics of urban resilience policy processes. Additionally, through CDKN, he was heavily involved in the global process to forge the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals. He will present his thoughts on the needs of policy makers.