

CSR TODAY

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SOUTHEAST ASIA'S HEALTHCARE SUSTAINABILITY STRUGGLE LINGERS POST-COVID

The pandemic shone a spotlight on the medical waste generated by stretched hospitals. The healthcare sector's decarbonisation efforts continue to be hampered by cost, habits and a lack of data

CSR INITIATIVE

MBRDI's 5-Year Clean Green Nandi Project Enhances Biodiversity, Clears 46,000 Kgs of Waste

CSR FUTURE

Migration: Ties to 'home' are key for Himalayan communities that stay despite climate risks

CSR CONCERN

Mosquito-borne dengue grows deadlier in South Asia as planet warms



CSR TODAY

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Strengthening Traditional Industry of Khadi in India



Rajesh Tiwari
Publisher
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Turnover of Khadi and Village Industries (KVI) products reached historic high of Rs. 1.34 lakh crore in 2022-23 for the first time in Independent India

Sale of Khadi clothes increased from Rs. 1081 crore in 2013-14 to Rs. 5943 crore in 2022-23

In the last 9 years, the whole world is seeing the revolution that Indian artisans have woven on the charkha of Khadi.

Khadi commands a sentimental value for Indians. It symbolizes the need and importance of indigenous manufactured goods. Today, Khadi means the Fabric of our Nation's Progress and Resilience.

The khadi industry is one of the most prominent traditional industries in India as it not only boosts sales and employment opportunities for the artisans; but also strengthens export potential, contributes to GDP, promotes rural development and entrepreneurship.

Economic Development

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has even exceeded the turnover of the best FMCG companies in India. Owing to the constant support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, KVIC has, for the first time, clocked a massive turnover of Rs 1.34 lakh crore in 2022-23. In 2013-14, the turnover of Khadi and Village Industries (KVI) products was Rs. 31,154 crores.

There has been an unprecedented growth of 332% in the sale of indigenous Khadi products made by artisans from 2013-14 to 2022-23. Among the different KVI products, there has been unmatched growth in the production of Khadi fabrics in the last 9 years. In 2013-14, the production of Khadi clothes was Rs 811 crore, with a jump of 260%, it has touched the figure of Rs.2916 crore in 2022-23. The demand for Khadi clothes has also increased rapidly from 2013-14 to 2022-23. In 2013-14, where its sales were only Rs 1081.04 crore, by 2022-23, it increased by 450% to touch the figure of Rs 5942.93 crore.

Khadi artisans associated with the Khadi sector are also getting the benefit of an increase in production and sale of Khadi clothes. Their remuneration has increased by

more than 150% since 2013-14. The record production of Khadi has been possible due to the continuous efforts and hard work of the cotton spinners and weavers engaged in the production and sale of Khadi.

Strengthening Rural Industries and Community Building

Rural revitalization plays an essential role in fulfilling the country's aim of becoming self-sufficient. In this regard, financial assistance provided through DBT to artisans, modernization of existing infrastructure like charkha and looms, digitization, development of new technology and designs through R&D activities has increased significantly in the last 9 years. This has contributed a lot to the development of Khadi and Village Industries products. To further strengthen the rural economy and to ensure self-sustainability, KVIC unveiled a unique government online platform eKhadiIndia.com in 2021, which showcases over 50,000 products.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has taken several other initiatives for promoting, developing and strengthening the rural traditional industries in the country. For instance, KVIC through its Village Industries Program is running skill development training programs to provide training, enhance income and improve livelihood opportunities in various rural industries like honey and beekeeping, palm jaggery, pottery, handmade paper and leather industry, rural engineering etc. Apart from this, KVIC is working on a plan to provide sewing machines as well as sewing training to rural women to provide maximum opportunities to women power in rural areas. Since 2013-14, 7.43 lakh people have been trained across the country and artisans have been provided with need-based tool kits. Further, the appeal of "Vocal for Local" has taken Khadi to new heights of popularity in the country and abroad. 🇮🇳

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CSR NEWS



Saina Nehwal, Race Ambassador, Harvest Gold Global Race 2023 flagging off the race in Gurugram

Harvest Gold donates 60,000 bread slices to the less fortunate

Harvest Gold, one of the leading bread brands in India under the umbrella of Grupo Bimbo, the world's largest baked food company today, donated bread slices to the less fortunate through the Robin Hood Army as a part of 'Harvest Gold Global Race 2023' initiative. The brand onboarded Saina Nehwal, Indian Badminton Player, as the Race Ambassador with the aim of motivating and encouraging masses to join the race.

The 'Harvest Gold Global Race 2023' serves as a platform to inspire individuals to combat hunger and participate in running to create a positive change in the country. This year, more than 3,000 individuals took part in the race, leading to over 60,000 slices of bread donation by Harvest Gold through the Robin

Hood Army, a leading NGO which strives to ensure nutrition for the less fortunate individuals. Harvest Gold Global Race took place on September 24, 2023, with four different categories, 3K(walkathon), 3K(run), 5K(run) and 10K(run), which allowed people from all age groups to participate.



Raj Kanwar Singh, MD, Grupo Bimbo India with Saina Nehwal, Race Ambassador, Harvest Gold Global Race 2023 felicitating the winners

From family, friends, children and runners, individuals who have transitioned to a healthy lifestyle and contributed to a noble cause while partaking in the race.

Raj Kanwar Singh, Managing Director of Grupo Bimbo, said, - "Guided by a vision of nourishing a better world, Harvest Gold remains steadfast in its commitment to nurturing healthier lifestyle choices. The Harvest Gold Global Race 2023 serves as a purpose driven initiative, in which participants engage not only for their individual well-being but also to make meaningful contributions in support of the underprivileged. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all those who dedicated their time to participate in the World's Largest Race for a Cause."

Saina Nehwal said, "The ongoing challenge of limited food access is a critical issue globally, and it is a privilege for me to collaborate with Harvest Gold Global Race to bring change. In various ways, the initiative parallels the world of sports, requiring unwavering consistency and maximal effort to achieve success. I would like to express my personal gratitude to all those who took the initiative to move forward and support the underprivileged while choosing a healthy lifestyle."

The Global Race 2023 is in its 8th edition has pledged to donate 20 slices of bread for every registration received for the global race across 34 countries. These donations serve as a source of sustenance for the less fortunate segments of our society, reinforcing our dedication to making a positive impact on a global scale.



Climate Change Sparks Changes in India's Pearl Millet Farming Zones: New Study

A new study by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research - All India Coordinated Research Project on Pearl Millet (ICAR-AICRP) suggests a re-evaluation of how and where pearl millet is grown in India due to changing climate conditions.

Pearl millet, an essential cornerstone of India's food security, finds itself at a critical juncture.

Amidst shifting weather patterns and evolving agricultural priorities, this study urges a timely revision of the classification criteria governing pearl millet cultivation zones, originally established back in 1979.

This study, featured in a special issue of the *Agronomy Journal*, used data from ICRISAT's District Level Database (DLD) to carefully re-examine the entire system.

Director General of ICRISAT Dr Jacqueline Hughes applauded the study and said that with climate change now a permanent reality,

it is imperative to recalibrate the approach towards understanding and nurturing this vital crop for dryland communities.

"This new classification system aims to optimize pearl millet production, to effectively assist policymakers, researchers, and farmers make

better evidence-based decisions," said Dr Hughes.

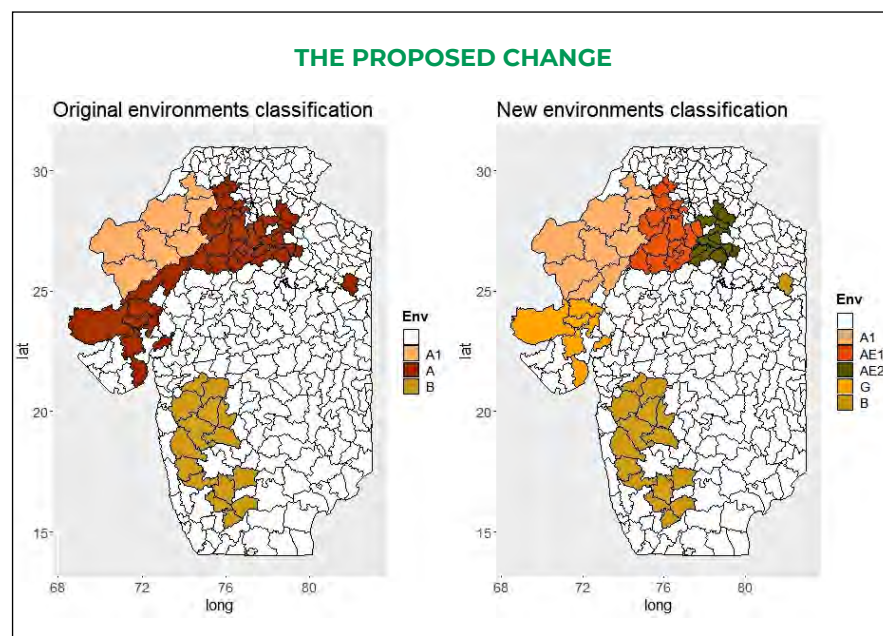
The study used digital technology and crop models to re-evaluate the zones, creating a "digital twin" of the pearl millet system. This digital twin helps design crops and strategies tailored to the current and future climate conditions of each region.

"This collaborative effort with ICRISAT has led to innovative tools that can greatly improve pearl millet farming, including the selection of new testing sites," said Dr Tara Satyavathi, Director of ICAR-Indian Institute of Millets Research and Project Coordinator of ICAR-AICRP on Pearl Millet.

Currently, India's zones are based on rainfall and soil type: A1 for arid regions in Rajasthan, A for semi-arid regions in North and Central India, and B for semi-arid regions with heavy soils in South India.

The study suggests reconsidering the evolving context, particularly within the original Zone A. The study suggests reconsidering the evolving context, particularly within the original Zone A.

The proposed changes suggest re-evaluating the A zone, considering evolving climate conditions. "The proposed new zones take into



account the complexity of the system in response to changing climate conditions. While the existing zoning for the A1 and B zones is generally still applicable, the suggestion is to modify the A zone.

"The existing A zone can be broken down into three distinct subzones: G, AE1, and AE2, covering the states in North and Central India. The G zone encompasses Gujarat, AE1 covers East Rajasthan

and Haryana, and AE2 covers Uttar Pradesh," said Dr Vincent Garin, Post-Doctoral Fellow at ICRISAT. The new zoning framework identifies 'AE1' as the core of India's pearl millet production, where favorable climate and soil conditions, along with improved pearl millet varieties, have led to significant yield increases.

'AE2' shows promising yield progress and better farming practices, offering potential for

export-oriented gains. The G zone is experiencing more rainfall due to climate changes, which may lead farmers to shift towards cash crops and limit pearl millet cultivation to the summer season. This research was funded through collaborations between ICAR, ICRISAT, the Swiss National Science Foundation, the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, and the Crops to End Hunger initiative.

ReNew Announces Clinton Global Initiative Commitment to Business-Driven Clean Energy and Education in India

ReNew Energy Global Plc (ReNew), India's leading decarbonization solutions company, has announced the launch of its Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Commitment to Action by tackling two of the toughest barriers to the renewable energy transition—clean energy production and youth education.

This news was shared at the CGI 2023 Meeting in New York.

As India transitions to renewable energy, it grapples with the issue of increasing base load capacity through use of renewable energy resources. Currently, the average wind or solar plant in India generates no more than 25-30 percent of its potential energy output annually. In response to this challenge, ReNew is setting up India's first Round-The-Clock (RTC) project, capable of providing uninterrupted power to the energy grid. Energy storage solutions will be incorporated into the project, boosting the annual energy generation 80 percent.

ReNew, through its philanthropic arm ReNew Foundation, will also engage with middle school-age students in clean energy education and awareness through ReNew's Young Climate Leaders Course. Because middle school is when many students begin to understand the science behind clean energy technologies. The initiative will focus on educating these students through a variety of efforts that empower and inspire them to lead a lifestyle for a positive environment.

"The clean energy transition in India is underway and the country has made great progress in working toward its net-zero targets," said ReNew's Co-founder and Chairperson Sustainability, Vaishali N Sinha. "This Commitment to Action highlights ReNew's increased focus on driving climate action through investment in both the business and education of renewable energy. By investing in these areas, we will not only accelerate the country's transition to clean energy

but empower the next generation to create a sustainable lifestyle."

ReNew will invest more than \$1 billion into the RTC projects that are currently under construction in four locations across three states in India. These projects will be completed in 2024. As part of its commitment, ReNew will secure a supply of 400 Mw for household consumption as well as for Indian railways. Additionally, over the next two years, ReNew will roll out a phased approach to climate advocacy and education, modeled on core principles of Prime Minister Modi's call for 'LiFE' (i.e. Lifestyle for Environment). This program will include a baseline assessment of current knowledge, executing climate-focused activities such as sanitation drives in villages, developing smart classrooms and digital labs, and instituting a third-party-based behavior change study. It will focus on 200 schools in select states in India with a potential impact of 10,000 students.

Phoenix Marketcity Mumbai Shines Spotlight on Marine Life Conservation in India with The Whistling Whales

Mumbai's shopping destination, Phoenix Marketcity Mumbai is proud to announce the unveiling of a breathtaking installation 'The Whistling Whales'. This initiative is aimed at raising awareness and promoting marine life conservation in India.

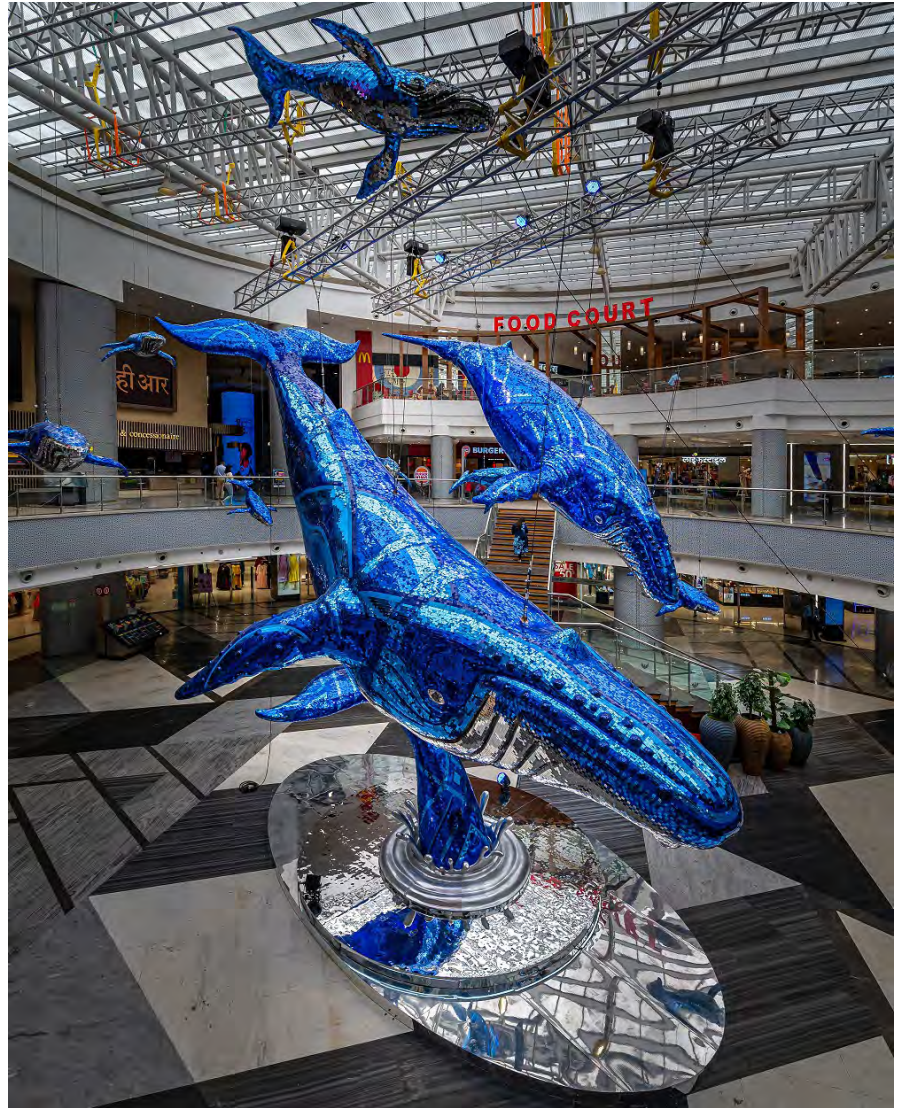
The decor is a life-sized, majestic sculpture of Whales, meticulously crafted by talented artists and marine life enthusiasts. The installation entails stunning attention to detail, bringing the gentle giants to life, reminding visitors of the beauty and significance of marine biodiversity.

Need of the hour!!

The primary goal of the whale setup is to foster a sense of environmental responsibility and inspire positive and urgent action for marine life conservation in India. The installation seeks to create a powerful visual & audio impact that sparks curiosity and engages the public in conversations about protecting our oceans and aquatic ecosystems.

Education and Information will lead the way

Alongside "The Whistling Whales" exhibit, we will showcase marine photography by renowned photographers like Pratik Chorge, Prathamesh Khedwan, and Sarang Naik, complemented by informative panels and multimedia presentations. These offer valuable insights into marine ecosystems' significance in sustaining life on Earth. Discover India's diverse marine species and the threats they face from pollution, habitat loss, and climate change. Our aim is to inspire visitors to embrace sustainable



practices in their daily lives. "I am proud to present this awe-inspiring 'The Whistling Whales' to our esteemed visitors of the Phoenix Marketcity Mumbai. Through the sheer magnificence, we aim to inspire an appreciation for the wonders of marine life and foster a collective responsibility to conserve our oceans. Together, let us harmonize

our efforts, protect our precious marine ecosystems, and ensure a flourishing home for these majestic creatures for generations to come. At Phoenix Marketcity Mumbai, we are dedicated to providing our customers with a truly unique and incredible experience every time they visit, aligning perfectly with our mission to create unforgettable moments

while also promoting environmental awareness. " -Mayank Lalpuria, Vice President Marketing, The Phoenix Mills Ltd

Supporting Local Communities

Phoenix Marketcity Mumbai has collaborated with a prominent marine conservation NGO- Coastal Conservation Foundation to support their efforts in safeguarding India's marine ecosystems. Marine Life of Mumbai is the flagship program of the Coastal Conservation Foundation (CCF), a marine research and conservation organization. The NGO will be displaying a short film, Hidden In Plain Sight, through which the goal of CCF is to raise awareness about the fascinating array of marine life

that can be found along the coast of Mumbai and to encourage the public to rediscover these natural treasures hidden in plain sight. Visitors will have the opportunity to learn about these organizations and actively contribute to their conservation initiatives through donations and other forms of support.

Shaunak Modi, Director and Co-founder at Coastal Conservation Foundation said "We have collectively ignored the wellbeing of our seas and oceans for quite long. Whether it's giving us oxygen or providing sustenance to a large populace worldwide, the health of our oceans plays a crucial role in our survival. We are interlinked. Marine conservation truly is the need of the hour and it makes me very happy to see

Phoenix Marketcity giving support in amplifying our concerns and efforts in a bid to conserve our shores. What better way to celebrate our oceans than with the most magnificent creatures that inhabit them. I hope to see this support continue in the years to come."

Ending on a sustainable note

In line with our dedication to environmental sustainability, the management of Phoenix Marketcity Mumbai has chosen to disassemble the installation using eco-friendly methods. Additionally, we are proud to announce that the entire installation will be fully recycled within our facility, aligning with our commitment to environmental responsibility.

DECATHLON and World Cleanup Day organisation partner to promote sustainable practices around sport

Continuing with the tradition to educate people about responsibly carrying out their sports activities, DECATHLON in association with the World Cleanup Day organisation has once again partnered to clean and protect playgrounds while undertaking sports activities. In a bid to keep the planet healthy, waste collection becomes an integral part of keeping the surroundings clean. Along with aiding the preservation of environmental quality in the long run, it also keeps the community active in a healthy manner, allowing one to connect with eco-passionate peers and forge meaningful friendships for a cleaner and greener future. Such partnerships can be transformational for both individuals and cities.

The pan-India event is set to be a fun event centered on

sustainability for teammates, families, and friends through a common interest. Participants will witness fun and engaging events such as beach cleanup, hike plogging, cycling events, and digital cleanups. To raise awareness around waste management and sustainable practices, there will be physical training on segregation and composting through vendor partners. Stalls from vendors in the zero-waste space will also adorn the sites to further educate the crowd.

Annie George, Sustainability Leader, Decathlon India said, "DECATHLON is elated to be yet again partnering with World Cleanup Day to contribute to better waste management in our cities and contributes towards our consistent effort as an organization towards the same, which we believe is important for sustaining communities. This partnership highlights the common values of

sports and ecology. Reconnecting with the environment sustainably along with friends and families is one step forward to take charge of creating an impactful change in our surroundings. The collective participation of DECATHLON teammates at 60+ events across 50 cities is sure to bring forth the right team spirit to take charge of protecting and cleaning playgrounds. We are excited to be part of making a change towards a healthier and more sustainable environment where our future generations can flourish."

Last year, the event took place across the country with 35 events, and around 1482 kg of litter was collected. People came out to participate in large numbers. This year too, around 5,000 people are expected to participate in the cleanup which will enhance playgrounds and beautify green spaces.

ClimateRISE Alliance launches 'Interwoven Futures' spotlighting civil society organisations at the forefront of intersectional climate action

ClimateRISE Alliance, a collaborative platform dedicated to accelerating India's journey towards climate resilience for its most vulnerable communities, launched its compendium, 'Interwoven Futures: How Civil Society Organisations Can Accelerate India's Journey towards Climate Resilience', at the Dasra Philanthropy Forum in New York. This comprehensive collection of 15 case studies displays efforts of civil society organisations (CSOs) across India, who are at the forefront of intersectional climate action at the grassroots level.

The compendium provides a detailed exploration of the intertwined challenges of climate change and its impact on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It emphasizes the critical role of CSOs in driving transformative change, bridging the gap between climate challenges and sustainable development goals. For each of the pivotal SDGs (SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, SDG 5: Gender Equality, SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 15: Life on Land, and SDG 17: Partnerships for Goals), the compendium offers insights into innovative climate solutions, advocating for a collaborative approach involving governments, CSOs, and philanthropic entities.

India, ranked as the fifth most vulnerable nation among 181 countries, faces multifaceted challenges from climate change, ranging from floods and droughts to air pollution. These adversities threaten food security, biodiversity, and could potentially trigger mass migrations. The

marginalized communities, unfortunately, withstand the worst of these challenges, despite contributing the least to the crisis.

As the compendium delves into the various interventions by CSOs, a recurring theme is the importance of local action. Recognizing and addressing the unique challenges faced by individual communities is paramount. In this context, Avinash Krishnamurthy, Director of Biome Environmental Trust, remarked, "It is important to understand what is happening locally and build the capacity of institutes up to the ward level to respond to climate change."

These diverse solutions implemented by CSOs, emphasizing their interconnectedness with broader social and economic challenges. Featured organisations such as Rythu Sadhikara Samstha (RySS), Professional Assistance for Developmental Action (PRADAN), Pragati Abhiyan, Waste Warriors Society, Mahila Housing Trust, Buzz Women, Reap Benefit, Centre for Wildlife Studies, Swayam Shikshan Prayog, Technology for Wildlife, Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, Foundation for Ecological Society, Janaagraha, Biome Environmental Trust, SELCO Foundation are pioneering:

- Transitioning to more holistic approaches such as natural farming and agro-ecology that emphasizes the integration of ecological principles into farming practices
- Building effective policy-praxis interfaces and strengthening the resilience of India's healthcare

infrastructure to deal with the burgeoning health impacts of the climate crisis

- Determining frameworks for or responsive city planning; and collaborative and integrated systems of urban governance which enables cities to respond to and withstand a wide range of climate shocks
- Implementing Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) at scale in sectors like protecting existing natural ecosystems, ecological restoration, nature-based adaptation, nature-based city planning, and agroforestry with the aim to provide sustainable and effective alternatives to resource-intensive solutions
- Equipping women with the knowledge to adapt to changing environmental conditions; mainstreaming gender-inclusive policies that recognize women's roles as caregivers, farmers, and community leaders; scaling financial resources and technical support to women-led initiatives; and encouraging participation in decision-making processes are crucial strategies for enabling women to lead the charge on climate action.

Highlighting the critical role of women in steering climate action, Bijal Brahmbhatt, Director of Mahila Housing Trust, commented, "Mahila Housing Trust has consistently promoted a community-based resilience model that is women-led. We envision women as proactive agents of climate action, not just as passive victims."

Daughters of truck drivers to get Mahindra SAARTHI ABHIYAAN Scholarship for education

This Drivers' Day, Mahindra Truck and Bus Division (MTBD), a part of the Mahindra Group, awarded scholarships for the daughters of truck drivers, through the Mahindra Saarthi Abhiyaan. Project Mahindra Saarthi Abhiyaan is committed to make a small contribution towards transforming the lives of these girls by supporting their right to a higher education.

Mahindra is one of the first commercial vehicle manufacturers to pioneer this initiative and felicitate the selected candidates with a scholarship of Rs.10,000/- along with a certificate in recognition of their achievement. This endeavour marks another significant milestone in Mahindra Truck and Bus Division's ongoing commitment to the Truck driver community, which was initiated with the Mahindra Saarthi Abhiyaan in 2014. The initial outreach was conducted through reach out program at 75+ transport hubs pan India and well defined, transparent, and independent process. Until now, 8928 young girls have already benefited from scholarships under the initiative, allowing them to pursue their aspirations.

Speaking on the occasion, Jalaj Gupta, Business Head – Commercial Vehicles, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., said, "Mahindra Saarthi Abhiyaan is committed to empowering women in the Commercial Vehicle ecosystem and aims to improve the lives of the driver community. With this program we are elated to offer the daughters of Truck Drivers the opportunity to dream big and provide them with the support they need to soar towards their career goals. Mahindra Saarthi Abhiyaan has been warmly embraced by our drivers and partners, showcasing its effectiveness in enabling young girls to achieve their dreams."

The company has planned to felicitate each girl selected for this scholarship by direct bank transfer of INR 10,000 and a certificate in recognition of this achievement. The felicitation will be hosted in Feb-Mar'24 at select locations by Mahindra Truck and Bus leadership India wherein 1100 scholarships will be awarded to Truck Drivers' Daughters.

Airbus signs MoU with Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya to develop aerospace human capital in India

Airbus, a pioneer of the global aerospace industry, and the Vadodara-based Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya (GSV), have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a holistic partnership that includes development of academic curricula, faculty, industrial experience, training and scholarships, and collaboration with international institutes.

For Airbus, India is not just a market but a strategic resource hub where the company is expanding its industrial footprint, including aircraft assembly, manufacturing and design, as well as developing training and academic collaboration to mature all the building blocks required for an integrated aerospace ecosystem in the country.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Minister for Railways, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology, Government of India, Ashwini Vaishnaw. As per the MoU, Airbus and the GSV, a central university under the administrative control of the Ministry of Railways, Government of India, will collaborate in the fields of research, teaching, and training of students to deepen their understanding of the scientific, technological, and management topics pertaining to the aerospace sector. Both entities will work together to support the development of the academic curriculum as well as the executive programmes relevant to the sector. Additionally, they will explore potential synergies for joint research, partnerships with international institutes and internship and placement opportunities for the students of GSV.

Speaking at the signing, Rémi Maillard, President and Managing Director, Airbus India and South Asia, said, "We subscribe to the Gati Shakti vision of seamless and efficient connectivity. We are committed to developing India as a global aviation hub and to further supporting the growth of the commercial aviation industry in the country. A core element of the aerospace ecosystem is talent development. Under this partnership with the GSV, we will bring in our global expertise to develop the best diverse talents in India and build a strong pipeline of skilled workforce for the sector."

The Vice Chancellor of Gati Shakti Vishwavidyalaya, Prof. (Dr.) Manoj Choudhary, highlighted, "Being an industry-driven and innovation-driven university, focusing exclusively on the transportation and logistics sector, this partnership with Airbus will very significantly enhance the aerospace and aviation sector in India through creation of best-in-class talent and joint research programmes."

Anil Agarwal Foundation launches a Multimedia Campaign to address Hunger & Malnourishment amongst Children

Anil Agarwal Foundation (AAF), the philanthropic arm of Vedanta Limited has launched a campaign, to address the pressing issues of hunger and malnutrition. Beginning with a personal note from the Chairman, Mr. Anil Agarwal that was released today in print media, the multi-media campaign will include video and digital assets as well. Commencing in the month of September, also observed as the National Nutrition Month or 'Poshan Maah', the campaign with the tagline 'Agar Bachpan Se Pucha, Khaana Khaya Toh Desh Ka Kal Banaya' highlights the importance of basic nutrition and propagates the need for holistic development of children in our country, to nurture their untapped potential and to ensure that they are not devoid of opportunities of growth. The campaign represents the Foundation's dedication to build a better future for children and youth in India by ensuring balanced nutrition required for growth and development.

Commenting on the campaign launch, Priya Agarwal Hebbar, Director, Vedanta Limited and Chairperson, Hindustan Zinc Ltd., said, "Malnourishment is an issue that is extremely close to our hearts, stemming from my father's personal journey and experience of hunger in his childhood. Today, as a group, our vision is that no child should go to bed hungry. The launch of this campaign marks the beginning of a movement that will harness the power of communities as we together combat malnourishment.

The campaign has been launched with a heartfelt note from Vedanta Chairman, Mr. Anil Agarwal, outlining his personal experience and vision.

It seeks to address the critical issue of child nutrition and ensure nurturing of their untapped potential.

Launched during the National Nutrition Month, it will run across print, TV & digital platforms.

Through the campaign, Anil Agarwal Foundation (AAF) aims to engage every citizen of India in the movement to eliminate hunger and malnutrition.

Our Nand Ghars also focus on the dream that every child has the potential to be a leader and take India to new heights. Through our Nand Ghars, we want to give every child the opportunity she/he deserves. This campaign is another step in this direction.

The campaign, designed and executed by McCANN Erickson (India), in its first phase, strives to spread awareness among citizens to end hunger and malnutrition and provide equal opportunities to our future generation for a better

tomorrow. With this launch, Anil Agarwal Foundation has also revealed its new logo, inspired by a growing sapling symbolizing AAF's philosophy that there is potential in everyone that should be recognized and nurtured to flower to its maturity.

Sharing his thoughts on the campaign, Prasoon Joshi, CEO & CCO at McCann Worldgroup India and Chairman, Asia Pacific said, "When campaigns are born out of true-life experiences, they are authentic and strike a genuine chord with people. This is one such campaign which genuinely reflects a felt truth and a true connect. It also tries to shake one out of inertia and move society towards positive action."

AAF through its flagship social impact project Nand Ghar, a collaborative project between Vedanta and the Government of India is contributing to eliminating hunger and malnutrition across the country. It aims to develop and modernise over 29,000 Anganwadis across the country. It has already developed 5,500 Anganwadis into Nand Ghars so far and is impacting the community, especially children and women at the grassroots through holistic development opportunities. Aligned with the Government of India's POSHAN Abhiyaan and this year's Poshan Maah theme of 'Suposhit Bharat, Sakshar Bharat, Sashakt Bharat', Nand Ghar has become a true personification of its vision to support health, education, and empowerment along with addressing nutritional needs of all beneficiaries.

HDFC Bank helps over 5,400 households fight water shortage in Maharashtra

Increased the average annual income of 1600 households from 20 villages in the district of Jafrabad

HDFC Bank has completed and handed over of their Climate Change Adaptation Project to the panchayat of 20 villages in Jafrabad, Maharashtra. The Climate Change Adaptation Project was launched in October 2020, to aid the local people in coping with adverse climate change vulnerabilities such as drought, heat waves, and erratic and intense rainfall patterns. These climatic variations and frequent drought-like conditions lead to land degradation, water scarcity, and low crop yield in the region, directly affecting the livelihood of residents, especially the farmers.

Key achievements of the project:

1. Average increase in water level by 4.88 ft.
2. Increase in agriculture productivity of 7,380 acres of agricultural land
3. Increase in the area under irrigation by 2,232 acres through an increase in water availability and water use efficiency
4. 1,500 acres of area brought under diversified farming systems (horticulture, agroforestry, mixed cropping, etc.)
5. 4,028 acres area protected from direct soil erosion
6. 520 acres of area brought under horticulture

7. Created 1,302 million litres of water harvesting potential
8. Increase in average annual household income of 1,628 HHs by 25%

Speaking at the handover ceremony, Nusrat Pathan, Head CSR at HDFC Bank said, "Climate change is likely to stay for a longer haul. It becomes imperative to change our approach, making it response based instead of relief based. Our interventions have successfully built the farmer's response capacity to become climate and market-compatible, while also improving their farm incomes and maintaining the integrity of the ecology." She further added that the projects also addressed many important issues like Runoff Harvesting, Groundwater recharge, Soil protection and moisture retention, Micro irrigation, and other climate-resilient agriculture practices."

HDFC Bank's interventions have successfully increased agricultural productivity and the area under irrigation through an increase in water availability, along with an increase in the agricultural land cover through diversified farming systems. The project took a multi-dimension approach with work in the areas of Area Treatment, Horticulture, Water Resource Development, Nala Deepening, Micro Irrigation System Automatic Weather Station, and Pest & Nutrient Management Demonstrations. Cumulatively, the project has helped enhance the lives of nearly all 25,000 village dwellers.

Bharti Foundation has been recognized as 'India's Best Workplaces™ for Women 2023' consecutively for the second year

- Recognized two times in a row as 'India's Best Workplaces for Women' by Great Place to Work.
- The Foundation has been empowering women especially in rural communities; 76% females are employed as teachers in Satya Bharti Schools with 61% females in leadership roles.

Empowering women through education and employment has been a steadfast commitment at Bharti Foundation. Being the philanthropic arm of Bharti Enterprises, the Foundation has always extended its efforts by bringing change through the work that they do, especially for females in rural India who have limited facilities in their ambit. Being a changemaker in the education sector, the Foundation has been persistently working towards cultivating a diverse workplace where women are empowered to make significant contributions to the organization's growth and simultaneously excel in their careers. 76% females are employed as teachers in Foundation's Satya Bharti Schools with 61% females in leadership roles. Moreover, quite a few Satya Bharti School (flagship program of Bharti Foundation) alumni have returned as teachers in the schools they have studied, setting examples in the community. This serves as a testimony to the fact that the Foundation has proved itself to be a beacon of support for the children through education.

Management for Social Change: ISDM hosts first Dialogues on Development Conference in Delhi

The Indian School of Development Management (ISDM) hosted India's first conference on Management for Social Change at Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi.

This pioneering event, a first of its kind in India, reiterated the pivotal role of Development Management in driving social change and brought together esteemed leaders and representatives from a diverse spectrum of social purpose organisations, donors, government officials, and business luminaries. The day-long event provided a dynamic platform for meaningful discussions and collaborations, featuring engaging plenary sessions, interactive and informative breakout discussions and sessions. The conference commenced with a plenary on "Power of Management to Bring About Social Change," attended by Saurabh Garg, Secretary of the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment and Neera Nundy, Co-Founder & Partner at Dasra.

The plenary session explored the multifaceted dimensions of the power of management to drive sustained impact at scale and bring about social change through the unique experiences and perspectives shared by the guest speakers.

Speaking at the occasion, Garg said, "Collaborative and co-created platforms like the Dialogues on Development Management (DoDM) are vital. Much like the efforts of the government in bringing together partnerships and alliances between nations and stakeholders to address developmental and planetary challenges, there is a need for civil society and the corporates to come together to address barriers and concerns. The scale at which global and national challenges affect lives and livelihoods today, requires principles of management that are aligned with and responds to communities, contexts and resources at the micro and macro levels."

The closing plenary for the session titled "Transforming India through New Age Philanthropy," was marked by the presence and insights from Anisha Ramakrishnan, Director, Transworld group of Companies, Anupama Dalmia, Founder & Director, Seekho Sikhao Foundation, Radhika Bharat Ram, Founder Karm Fellowship for Young Indian Women, Nishant Arya, Vice Chairman & MD of JBM Group, and Tara Singh Vachani, Executive Chairperson of Antara Senior Living. The session focused on how the philanthropic ecosystem can play to catalyse transformative change at scale and was moderated by Amit Chandra, Co-Founder of ATE Chandra Foundation (ATECF).

Pricol's latest CSR initiative 'Arogya Vanam' promotes environmental sustainability

Pricol, a leading global automotive products and solutions provider, is pleased to announce 'Arogya Vanam' - a one of a kind Tree Plantation Project in collaboration with Siruthuli. This CSR initiative is designed to showcase India's rich legacy of medicinal trees and plants to promote environmental sustainability. Arogya Vanam has been thoughtfully crafted as an Experiential Centre, offering an educational platform to explore the diverse array of medicinal trees and plants native to our country. Pricol, recognizing the immense healing potential within our indigenous flora, is proud to present this unique tree plantation project with a focus on health and wellness.



In tribute to the pioneering contributions of Dr J. G. Shanmughanathan, Founder of Ganga Hospital, Coimbatore, Dr G. Sivaraman, the distinguished Managing Director of Arogya Healthcare Chennai, will preside over the launch event to help plant 93 types of medicinal trees, symbolizing their lasting impact on healthcare. Additionally, as an expression of gratitude towards its Investors and Stakeholders, Pricol will also plant an additional 66 trees, signifying unity and shared responsibility.

In total, over 900 trees, comprising diverse species across medicinal and herbal varieties will be planted to create a thriving and ecological ecosystem.

In alignment with its commitment to environmental sustainability, Pricol, in collaboration with Siruthuli, will donate two electric vehicles (EVs), further emphasizing the company's dedication to cleaner transportation and reducing the carbon footprint. One of these vehicles has already been delivered to the Perur, Chettipalayam Panchayat.

o9 Solutions' New o9 Digital Tomorrow Grant for Digital Literacy and Inclusion Aims to Bridge the Digital Divide in Underserved Communities

o9 Solutions, a leading enterprise AI software platform provider for transforming planning and decision-making, has launched its inaugural o9 Digital Tomorrow Grant, which will provide \$250,000 to support initiatives that help advance digital literacy and promote technology inclusion for underserved communities.

The grant's intended purpose is to help communities improve digital literacy, enhance and broaden access to technology devices, empower marginalized groups' use of technology, promote responsible digital citizenship, foster innovation, and strengthen community engagement. The 2023 application process is open to eligible entities, including non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, and educational institutions as outlined in the grant's guidelines, through Oct. 31, 2023. Eligible applications will be reviewed by a comprehensive panel of stakeholders from within o9, and the Company's partners. The final selection will be made by o9 leadership and selected entities will be notified in early December 2023.

"The digital divide is a significant issue in our global society, and the groups and regions affected by a lack of access to technology cannot fully participate in the digital age," says Igor Rikalo, President and COO at o9 Solutions. "Through the o9 Digital Tomorrow Grant, we seek to continue to help bridge this gap by funding organizations that foster access to technology that help educate and empower underserved communities to flourish in a technology-driven world."



Chakri Gottemukkala, CEO and co-founder of o9 Solutions

For more information about the o9 Digital Tomorrow Grant, please visit www.o9solutions.com/grant/ or contact o9 at o9grant@o9solutions.com. o9 Digital Tomorrow Grant is a continuance of the Company's strong commitment to supporting social impact initiatives that promote inclusion and accessibility in technology. o9 has championed community-focused organizations across the globe through:

- o9 supported 2 interns from the Microsoft and Tata STRIVE Cybershikshaa program, helping female engineering/MCA graduates from humble backgrounds enter the digital industry.

- o9 hosted a virtual panel with Girls Inc, an organization that empowers young women through mentorship and programming.

- o9 donated laptops for Panchayath Union Middle School in celebration of Teachers day in India. The teachers were trained to use the laptops and



Igor Rikalo, President and COO at o9 Solutions

- the educational resources installed. o9 collaborated with India Cares Foundation, Swabhimaan and VIDYA Integrated Development for Youth and Adults, to set up a Computer Learning Center to provide accessible computer education for all the children in one of the urban communities in Bangalore.

- o9 has a strategic collaboration with the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TSWREIS). o9 provided B. Tech curriculum books to 15 women engineering colleges in Telangana. Furthermore, o9 funded the complete renovation and donation of equipment enabling more than 600 girls to access fully equipped and advanced science labs.

- In 'Q4 2022, o9 made a substantial contribution to Khan Academy to support their hosting costs so that its free education resources could be accessible to 750,000 digital learners across the globe.

CSR INDIA UNITED

Grassroot lenders achieve breakthrough in 'WASH' financing with support from NABSAMRUDDHI and Water.org



Lighting of the lamp by the dignitaries



Nabard speaks at WASH event organized by NABSAMRUDDHI and water.org



NABSAMRUDDHI MD Ms. Bonani Roychoudhury delivering key address note

NABSAMRUDDHI, an NBFC subsidiary of NABARD, and Water.org, a global nonprofit organization, co-organized a summit

on 'WASH lending' in Mumbai with the primary objective of the summit was to promote Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene financing as a critical

factor in ensuring the sustainable development of the ecosystem.

The Summit was attended by various NBFCs, MFIs, HFCs, and other relevant stakeholders who brought up pertinent points on gender integration and mainstreaming among others.

Bonani Roychoudhury, Managing Director of NABSAMRUDDHI, highlighted the urgent need to advance the SDG 6 goals (Clean water and sanitation), especially from the gender equity perspective. She touched upon the role played by NABARD and NABSAMRUDDHI in promoting concessional WASH lending as a champion segment under its focus area of Green & Wellness finance. "We have been making steady and sustained investments towards this end which has particularly gained traction over the last two years. It is also notable that over 90% of about 40,000 ultimate beneficiaries covered under NABSAMRUDDHI's WASH program are women. The support has led to an increase in disposable income levels and improvement in health, hygiene, quality of life. The company is exploring other structured products to enhance its WASH footprint."

Manoj Gulati, Regional Director, South Asia, Water.org Conference touched upon the relevance of climate resilience and how the lack of access falls disproportionately on certain classes especially women making them more vulnerable. While speaking of the scope of Water.org activities through technical assistance and capacity building, he highlighted the gaps in financing and the need for developing a robust framework to ensure investment readiness from a global standpoint. The summit included a panel discussion on 'Impact of RBI regulations pertaining to WASH financing and ways to strengthen it', moderated by Gyan Prakash from Water.org. The panelists were Ramesh Ganta GM,



Regional Director South Asia of Water.org addresses the summit attendees

NABARD; Aswini Acharya COO & PSL Head – Inorganic Business, DBS Bank; Ravinder Kumar- National

Financial Inclusion Expert, FINISH Society and Maheep Panwar COO, NABSAMRUDDHI. Shri Ramesh

Ganta highlighted NABARD's instrumental role in WASH financing and indicated that NABARD has instituted a Special Refinance Facility to eligible financial institutions for financing WASH related activities at concessional rates.

Some key takeaways from the Summit included the need to support MFIs to enhance WASH lending, collaborative action on capacity building of lenders and borrowers, funding of MSMEs for community-level solutions, and development of innovative products for WASH Lending.

Magic Bus India Foundation Launches Phase 2 of Future X

Magic Bus India Foundation, a leading non-profit organisation in the education and skilling space, has unveiled the second phase of 'Future X,' an innovative and strategic livelihood programme. This programme equips young people with 21st-century skills for life and work, harnessing the potential of technology to reach young people on a larger scale through its enhanced learning pathways. The programme has been supported by Michael & Susan Dell Foundation since 2020.

This phase of the programme will be implemented across seven key centers spread across five cities, including Sunkadakatte in Bengaluru, Sanatorium Tambaram, and Adyar in Chennai, Secunderabad and Panjagutta in Hyderabad, Govandi in Mumbai, and Peeragarhi in Delhi.

Magic Bus identifies these communities and sets up physical centers post assessing the employment opportunities in the area and mapping the aspirations of young people. Many of these individuals are the first in their families to seek

formal sector employment, often lacking the necessary life and employability skills and support needed to transition into the world of work.

Future X is poised to revolutionise the way the skilling ecosystem operates in India. It aims to become a scalable model while enhancing organisational efficiency and quality implementation. The programme will create a state-of-the-art technology platform to unlock and map end-to-end lifecycle of young individuals, touching upon each stage of the value chain (mobilization, learning pathways, training, placement, post-placement, and alumni connections in the form of continuous learning). This will enable Magic Bus to reach 4,000 young people in the current year of implementation (2023-2024), and a cumulative 70,000 young people by the end of 2027 across 23 centers. The programme will indirectly benefit 80,000 to 100,000 college-going youths each year.

Jayant Rastogi, Global CEO, Magic Bus India Foundation, said, "We believe that Future X represents a significant step

forward in our commitment to empowering the youth. Our approach involves employing scalable strategies that allows us to reach millions of young people in the years to come. At the core of the programme is the technology platform that comprehensively maps the entire journey of young individuals, addressing each stage of the programme. We have also integrated cost-effective AI-enabled tools to support them in their learning journey. Our vision is to lead young individuals towards a brighter future where they can positively impact their communities, and our partnership with Michael & Susan Dell Foundation is instrumental in achieving this objective."

Future X's objectives are multifaceted, designed to enhance employment opportunities for young people. It aims to prepare them for the workforce by providing diverse learning channels, including in-person sessions focussed on life and employability skills, learning enhancement through group work and peer-to-peer learning, as well as sessions on digital and spoken English. The programme will also use low-cost AI-enabled mediums to support youth in learning at their own pace. This support will be facilitated through live chat assistance to resolve queries and by hosting videos of key skills, thereby strengthening learning outcomes for young people.

'Mother and Child Health and Nutrition Program' launched by Project Rise & ANNADA in Nandurbar, Maharashtra

Project Rise, the Dawoodi Bohra community's global philanthropic arm, announced the launch of 'Mother and Child Health and Nutrition Program' in the Nandurbar district of Maharashtra to support over 600 beneficiaries for the next 3 years.

This program is undertaken in partnership with the Association for Nutrition and Development Action (ANNADA), Nandurbar District Authorities and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) under the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The comprehensive program will provide micronutrient-fortified energy-dense food to malnourished children below six years and pregnant and lactating mothers across 10 Anganwadi centres. It will also educate pregnant and lactating mothers on breastfeeding and monitoring their health to mitigate physical and cognitive growth in children.

Thanking the Dawoodi Bohra community & ANNADA for initiating the program, Mr. Krishna Rathod, the Deputy CEO (Women and Child Development), Nandurbar Zilla Parishad said, "A health and nutrition initiative like this will go a long way in making a difference in the lives of undernourished children and achieving a hunger-free and healthy nation.

Alvin D'souza, Program Head at ANNADA, said, "Child undernutrition can lead to severe developmental issues, diseases, infections and even death. It is at the root of all the social problems and severely impacts national socio-economic development. Our program will use simple, community-relevant, ready-to-eat meals that provide almost 1/3rd of a child's recommended



dietary requirement of micronutrients. Most of these meals are millet-based and rich in protein. We are glad to have partnered with the Dawoodi Bohra community to be able to impact the lives of children in Nandurbar." In his address at the launch event, Kutubkhan Badri, representative of His Holiness in

the nearby town of Shahada said, "Our community leader His Holiness Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin guides us to show empathy and compassion, and look after the well-being of people, particularly those in need."

"Our community collaborated with ANNADA around five years ago to fight against malnutrition in

Govandi near Mumbai and Roha near Raigad District of Maharashtra, where we saw significant change in the health of our beneficiaries. This project in Nandurbar is an extension of our nutrition and zero-hunger objective of Project Rise.”

The program in Nandurbar was launched in September to support the Government of India’s “Rashtriya Poshan Maah”, or National Nutrition

Month, which promotes nationwide awareness of nutrition and hunger, especially for mothers and children.

India is home to the largest population of hungry people and almost 1/3rd of the world’s malnourished children. Almost every third child under 5 years suffers from stunting and about 20% suffer from wasting as per the National Family Health Survey 2019-21.

Maharashtra has a significant burden of child malnutrition, with less than 10% of children under 2 having access to an adequate diet. The situation is incredibly complex in rural and tribal areas. Working hand in hand with local communities, partners and Anganwadi centres can yield positive outcomes and raise the level of nutrition, health, and overall well-being of families.

Water For People debuts fashion film depicting the runway billions of women walk for clean water

Global nonprofit Water For People unveiled their first-ever fashion film, shot in rural India to raise awareness of the global water crisis – and specifically the burden that falls upon women and girls, who are most often responsible for water collection for themselves and their families.

Filmed in the Chikhaldara block of India’s Maharashtra state, the film features real women and girls from the local Korku tribe who walk this route up to six times per day with their water jug as their accessory. This film juxtaposes the breathtaking landscape and fashion in rural India with women and girls’ strenuous daily efforts to collect safe water.

“The film is a testament to the efforts of women and girls in the country who are walking tirelessly to ensure water is available for their households. However, due to the concerted efforts of the Government of India, through the National Jal Jeevan Mission, more than 12 crore rural households have tap water at home, thereby reducing the stress on women and girls. The government’s efforts, along with the interventions of civil society,

will ensure that the walk for water will end completely very soon,” said Bishwadeep Ghose, Country Director, Water For People India.

In Maharashtra, Water For People India, in partnership with the local government, has been working with 50 villages in the Amravati district. This work includes ensuring historically vulnerable and excluded populations, including low caste and tribal communities, have access to safe water and sanitation services.

Around the world, 2.2 billion people don’t have access to safe water, and 3.5 billion don’t have access to sanitation. Many people are still unaware of this ongoing critical issue and its impact on women, who spend 200 million hours each day collecting water.

Often starting at just four years old and well into old age, women and girls are primarily responsible for water collection, even when sick, pregnant, on their periods, and without adequate sanitation.

“The film reflects the current realities and obstacles women and girls face in their journey to collect water, drawing attention to the fact that the water crisis disproportionately impacts women, including

their schooling, physical safety, health, and economic opportunity,” said Katherine Williford, Water For People’s Chief Growth Officer.

“By launching as counterprogramming to NYFW, we wanted to capture the attention of global audiences who are already tuned in to this moment and shine a light on both the intersection of water, sanitation and hygiene issues and gender equality, as well as the broader work we do as an organization to equip communities with lasting access to safe water and sanitation services. It’s the least expected walk audiences expect to see this week,” Williford added.

Water For People began working in India in 1996, and in 2008 developed a locally registered arm to work in tandem on projects funded by Indian corporations, foundations, and individuals. To date, the organization has reached over 1.5 million people in India with reliable water and sanitation services.

The #runwayforwater is one no young girl or woman should have to walk. To learn more about Water For People’s work, as well as the women and communities featured in the video, visit waterforpeople.org/runwayforwater.

Mahindra Unveils Bolero Neo+ Ambulance, Priced at Rs. 13.99 Lakh

Aims to fill the gap between smaller van-based offerings and bigger coach-based offerings in the Type B Ambulance segment.

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., the leading SUV maker in India has launched the Bolero Neo+ Ambulance. Built to fully comply with AIS:125 (Part 1) norms that govern the Type B Ambulance segment, the Neo+ stands out for its superior OEM-level of build quality coupled with a versatility that will appeal to buyers in big cities, smaller towns and up-country locations.

The Neo+ shares the same tough underpinnings of the Bolero Neo, launched in 2021, but with a longer wheelbase for a more spacious cabin and a more powerful 2.2L mHawk engine to suit the requirements of ambulance owners and operators across different markets.

The Bolero Neo+ Ambulance is priced at ESR Rs. 13.99 Lakh, with a Government e-Marketplace (GeM) pricing of Rs. 12.31 Lakh.

Nalinikanth Gollagunta, CEO - Automotive Sector, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd., said, "With the launch of the Bolero Neo+ Ambulance, we reinforce our commitment to nation-building. The Bolero brand has long served sectors meant to improve and secure communities and the public at large. Ranging from the Police, Army and Paramilitary forces, to government departments engaged in firefighting, forestry, irrigation and public works, all have relied on Bolero-badged SUVs for its robustness and performance in



The Bolero Neo+ Ambulance is a versatile offering based on a proven platform that is designed to meet the varied needs of the growing patient transportation sector in big cities, smaller towns and upcountry locations.

Built on a longer version of the advanced Bolero Neo platform, this spacious ambulance comes with a tough body-on-frame architecture and is powered by the trusted 2.2L mHawk engine, for greater performance and smooth drivability, across different terrains.

diverse operational environments. The Bolero Neo+ Ambulance, with its versatile performance, continues this legacy by expanding accessibility

to healthcare services, especially for, but not limited to, those in the remote areas of smaller towns and upcountry locations.

The Bolero Neo+ Ambulance is underpinned by the robust Neo platform and its Gen-3 chassis that features a high-strength steel body shell. The Neo+ Ambulance comes with the more powerful 2.2-litre mHawk engine paired with a 6-speed gearbox in a rear-wheel-drive configuration. This setup delivers a power output of 120 HP and peak torque of 280 Nm, assuring rapid response times in emergencies.

While it comes with a longer wheelbase than its parent platform, the Neo+ Ambulance is still compact and drivable enough to ensure easy navigation in city traffic, while its body-on-frame construction and high ground clearance make it suitable for upcountry terrains. By combining strength, speed and space the Bolero Neo+ Ambulance exceeds the capabilities of smaller van-based offerings and offers better practicality

and efficiency than larger coach-based ambulances.

The Bolero Neo+ Ambulance is built to fully comply with AIS:125 (Part 1) norms that govern the Type B Ambulance segment. Mahindra has equipped it with a host of practical features aimed at improving patient

care and transport efficiency. This includes a single-person operable stretcher mechanism, provision for an oxygen cylinder, a washbasin assembly that facilitates hygiene and a public address system ensures clear communication during emergencies. Further enhancing its functionality,

the Bolero Neo+ Ambulance includes a D+4 seating capacity within its air-conditioned cabin.

With the Bolero Neo+ Ambulance, Mahindra reaffirms its commitment to providing affordable, reliable solutions to meet the diverse needs of the healthcare sector.

Bachpan Manao, Badhte Jao: Initiative to Celebrate Childhood and Foster Lifelong Growth

“Bachpan Manao, Badhte Jao" is a societal mission to celebrate childhood while nurturing the holistic development of every child. It is not just a campaign but a nation-building opportunity and societal mission, fostered by the vision that the early childhood experience (0-8 years) empowers every child in India to reach their full potential, equipping them to thrive in their future endeavors.

The launch of this initiative marks a significant milestone in advancing early childhood development and the foundational stage in India. EkStep Foundation is incubating the growing network of 75+ organizations that are aligned to solving for the growth, well being and development of India's youngest. EkStep is co-founded by Nandan Nilekani, Rohini Nilekani and Shankar Maruwada.

This initiative underscores the pivotal role of collaborative action in realizing every child's fundamental right to holistic growth. "Bachpan Manao, Badhte Jao" collabaction (a term derived from collaboration and action) is committed to forging partnerships that drive, sustain, and scale actions for lasting inter-generational impact.

Rohini Nilekani, co-founder, EkStep Foundation, shared her vision for the initiative, stating, "Bachpan Manao, Badhte Jao" is a societal mission to nurture the learning journey of India's children by celebrating childhood itself,

which is the greatest teacher of all. The youngest citizens of our country are the future. Every year, about 25 million children are born in India, and every year we have the opportunity to ensure that every generation of children is learning. We have the best opportunity to give that firm foundation of learning for every child in the country. A growing network of organizations has come together to complete this unfinished task of giving every little child the strong foundation needed to become a lifelong learner in a rapidly changing world. Come, let's all help to democratize the joy of learning."

As part of the initiative, the mission is launching a short film that encapsulates the simple yet profound joys of childhood, the moments where children learn and grow best. This heartwarming film aims to encourage viewers to "Celebrate Childhood" and opens their hearts and minds to the larger mission of optimizing the foundational years. This unified effort aims to encourage caring adults especially parents and teachers to see the holistic growth of every child and understand the window of opportunity these early years present while recognising the importance of the power of exploration and play as a means to strengthen foundational learning for every child.

Scientifically, it is known that the brain's plasticity is strongest during

the first 8 years and over 85% of an individual's brain development occurs by the age of 6. These early years lay the foundation for a child's future, shaping their physical, cognitive, and emotional development. Recognizing the profound and lasting impact of this phase on a child's overall well-being, "Bachpan Manao, Badhte Jao" is dedicated to ensuring that every child in India experiences a nurturing and empowering environment.

Adding further, Shankar Maruwada, said, "This mission urges us to relook at the way we approach early childhood in today's world. It invites us to understand, value and celebrate the abundance within and around each child. Our role is to be a catalyst for this mission so that it can grow further, carried proudly on the shoulders of all collabactors"

Building on the work and developments of decades of implementation of government policies, scientific research, the initiative brings to focus the promise of curriculum frameworks and the need to recognise and see the abundance inherent in childhood and also the abundance in the ecosystem working towards the wellbeing of India's youngest children no matter where they are. Every caring adult recognising and celebrating the first eight years of childhood as a festival of growth would be a powerful narrative for every child in India.



SOUTHEAST ASIA'S HEALTHCARE SUSTAINABILITY STRUGGLE LINGERS POST-COVID

The pandemic shone a spotlight on the medical waste generated by stretched hospitals. The healthcare sector's decarbonisation efforts continue to be hampered by cost, habits and a lack of data, writes **Liang Lei**

The world breathed a collective sigh of relief earlier this year, when Covid-19 was declassified as a global health emergency.

Hastily erected vaccination and test centres around the world were taken down after three years, as the last waves of winter infections tapered off. Heaps of medical waste – syringes, masks, scrubs – were incinerated and landfilled. More were dredged up in rivers and oceans.

As nations counted losses and devised plans to beef up health systems, many also pledged to redouble efforts to make the profession more sustainable. Healthcare's outsized impact on the environment was a known concern before the pandemic struck. A 2019 report found that the sector contributed to over 4 per cent of global emissions – more than other sectors like shipping (3 per cent), aviation (2 per cent) and hotels (1 per cent).

In rapidly developing but cash-strapped Southeast Asia, the struggle to strengthen while cleaning up healthcare could pitch different aspects of sustainable development – well-being and the environment – against each other.

As it stands, healthcare in Southeast Asia is not a big greenhouse gas contributor. The six largest markets, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, spewed 63 million tonnes of emissions in 2014, or 3 per cent of the industry globally. Indonesia has one of the lowest per-capita medical emissions in the world.

But healthcare emissions are known to grow with national wealth; Southeast Asia's economy has grown by 50 per cent in the nine years since. By comparison, healthcare already accounts for 8.5 per cent of emissions in the United States.

Experts in the region say getting cost-conscious hospitals to move faster on sustainability remains challenging after the pandemic. While some have found good business cases in slashing waste and switching to clean electricity, scaling up these efforts requires a larger-scale overhaul of hospital operations, they say.

And while certain aspects of healthcare – operating theatres, powerful scanners and such – are inherently power-hungry, habits and a lack of data could also be getting in the way of decarbonisation.

BUSINESS CASE

“Most of Southeast Asia's public health systems don't have enough funding to continue operating at normal levels [post Covid-19]. Convinc-

ing them to do decarbonisation work with limited resources is a bit of a challenge,” said Manjit Sohal, regional climate manager in the Asia branch of Health Care Without Harm.

So the global non-profit is helping hospitals find ways sustainability can also save money. In Southeast Asia, it advocates for measures such as switching to energy efficient lights and adopting solar energy, where upfront investments can be offset later with lower power bills.

“You really have to give [hospitals] a good business case on why they should adopt [certain measures],” Sohal said.

Finding cost savings in sustainability is something Mary Johnston Hospital, a 120-bed facility in Manila city in the Philippines, has had some success with.

At the height of the pandemic, the hospital sanitised and reused medical protective gear up to three times before disposal, at a time when some

equipment was so short in supply that they could only be found on the black market at triple the price.

In recent years, the thousand-odd solar panels on its rooftop have also been able to provide up to 35 per cent of the hospital’s power needs. The institution has been diverting 5 to 10 per cent of the savings to funding treatment for HIV and tuberculosis patients.

“We were looking to save the environment and save people at the same time,” said Dr Glenn Paraso, the hospital’s executive director.

The photovoltaic panels had cost about P27 million (US\$480,000), which the hospital amortised over five years, but cost savings would be made for 25 years, the lifespan of the panels, Paraso said. Some of the cells also came about via partnerships and donations from church networks the Methodist hospital is part of.

Other sustainability attempts have been more difficult. Mary John-

ston hospital had explored replacing plastic intravenous (IV) drip bags with reusable glass ones, but upfront costs would have doubled for the essential tool.

“What could I do? Can I pass [the cost] on to our patients?” Paraso said.

A switch to more sustainable hospital equipment could be significant – over 70 per cent of healthcare emissions globally come from “Scope 3”, or indirect supply chain sources.

Beyond IV bottles, reusable equipment – scalpels, syringes, tweezers – remains available in the region, experts tell Eco-Business, though they are quickly being replaced by disposable plastic equivalents, and one-time use kits, which are cheaper and more handy for doctors.

Bigger operational changes are needed too if more doctors switch back to reusables. While neighbourhood clinics can sanitise small tools in autoclaves – medical pressure pots for killing germs – larger, odd-sized and more sterile equipment,



Healthcare workers in medical garb at the Thailand Bamrasnaradura Infectious Disease Institute during the Covid-19 outbreak. Image: Flickr/ UN Women Asia and the Pacific.



Medical equipment is increasingly sold as one-time use kits. Reusable options are still on the market today, but are more expensive and becoming less common. Image: Pxhere.

along with simply having more gear to clean, would require more centralised sterilisation centres to be set up, explained Dr Louis Tan, chief executive of StarMed Specialist Centre in Singapore.

DATA VOID

New medical trends have already started emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic, and one in particular – telemedicine – is said to reduce the environmental burden of healthcare.

Initially offered to ease congestion in hospitals during the pandemic, patients have since caught on to video calling doctors for minor illnesses and simple consultations from home. Mobile healthcare application users doubled in Singapore from 2020 to 2022, consultancy Bain & Company reported. Emerging markets like Thailand and the Philippines showed greater jumps in application of over 11 and eight times, respectively.

The idea is that hospitals' Scope 3 emissions fall if they provide more telemedicine services, since fewer patients travel to doctors in person. But Tan has also seen a correspond-

ing need for more transport services for medication delivery.

"Delivered medical items come in a lot of packaging, and the [trip down] to patients' homes could just be for a couple of tablets, or a bottle of cough syrup. I think this is starting to emerge as a potential problem," Tan said.

The bigger-picture problem, Tan explained, lies in figuring out if new sustainability measures really work for the environment and patient safety – including where reusable tools are adopted, or adopting different workflows.

Such information requires industry benchmarks and more granular research, something that healthcare institutions are not equipped for. At the same time, the medical industry operates on hard data and evidence, Tan said.

"If you have the [safety and sustainability] information, no problem. But more often than not, things are evolving, and if you are at the forefront of that change, the data [isn't available]. That's why sometimes healthcare takes a longer time to adapt," he said.

To solve the accounting issue, Health Care Without Harm has developed an online calculator tailored for medical institutions, with guidance for hospitals to measure, for instance, patient commute, the use of anaesthetic vapours (some are powerful greenhouse gases), and pharmaceutical procurement.

The non-profit started training Southeast Asian medical professionals to use the calculator last year, and about 200 staff from 120 institutions have gone through the course.

"In terms of who is actually reporting it is still a work in progress because getting greenhouse gas data takes a lot of time," Sohal said.

But she stresses a lack of data cannot be grounds for inaction.

"When you look at a hospital, immediately you can tell what can be improved. You don't need a set of numbers to tell you that. The numbers help you prioritise and maximise your efforts, but [the lack of which] shouldn't stop you from doing something," she said.

Tan agrees that there are obvious inefficiencies to fix in standard medical practice – such as prescribing patients more medication and refills than needed.

FEW PARTNERS

Mary Johnston Hospital's Paraso said having more hospitals on board for sustainability measures could help too – such as if collectives, with more buying power, bargain for lower prices on reusable medical tools from their suppliers.

But finding like-minded healthcare partners could prove challenging. While more hospitals are looking at using resources more efficiently, few are setting pledges and targets in stone.

In the United Nations' Race to Zero campaign, where businesses and local governors pledge action towards net-zero emissions by 2050, only 81 out of over 12,500 entities are in the healthcare sector. In

contrast, there are 662 financial firms in the campaign, along with over 1,100 city governments.

Mary Johnston Hospital is one of the five hospitals in Southeast Asia in the Race to Zero initiative, along with Saint Paul's Hospital Iloilo (Philippines), Khoo Teck Puat Hospital (Singapore), Sunway Medical Centre Velocity (Malaysia) and Syamsudin Hospital (Indonesia). The low participation of hospitals could be partly attributed to the strict rules. The Race to Zero campaign wants members to have detailed action plans and report on progress annually – something Mary Johnston Hospital will have to start doing soon.

The campaign wants members to focus on halving emissions by 2030 and reaching net-zero by 2050 – the best way to keep global warming under the 1.5°C safety threshold, according to scientists.

Paraso acknowledges such targets are, as it stands, unattainable – with at most a 10 per cent emissions cut by 2030 likely. But he says participating in the campaign is about being accountable and making measurable progress.

At a national level, Laos, Timor Leste and Indonesia are among 66

The health sector has a higher moral responsibility, because there is a Hippocratic Oath to do no harm. That should extend beyond the patients, to the environment that impacts patient health.

Manjit Sohal,
Regional Climate Manager,
Health Care Without Harm Asia

countries that pledged to make their health systems more sustainable at the COP26 climate conference in 2021, held amid the pandemic. Laos said it would halve healthcare emissions by 2030.

While disruptive, Covid-19 helped jolt policymakers into taking action on sustainability, Health Care Without Harm's Sohal said. Health ministries across Southeast Asia have a "general awareness", she said, though not all know their specific carbon footprint.

WHAT'S NEXT?

For now, many of the feasible sus-

tainability actions centre around renewable energy, waste reduction and improving operational efficiency. Novel solutions, such as better hospital planning with artificial intelligence and medical gases with lower climate impacts are on the horizon.

More government support is needed to further scale up what hospitals can do, Paraso said. Solar panels probably need to get more efficient too, to further reduce the need for fossil-based power, he added.

And because a key tenet of sustainability lies in the well-being of future generations, how much responsibility doctors assume for them – and not just present patients – could matter too.

Some environmental advocacy groups in medical communities invoke in their campaigns the Hippocratic Oath, a professional pledge taken by doctors to uphold ethical standards and do no harm to patients.

Health Care Without Harm says the oath should extend to "people and the environment in the long run". Sohal added that it means the health sector has a greater duty than other commercial sectors to decarbonise.

It is a message that may require greater amplification in Southeast Asia – the link between Hippocratic Oath and sustainability is not common talk in Tan's work circles, he says.

"I suppose at the working level, on the ground, it is not something that many of us are aware of," he added. ■

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/southeast-asias-healthcare-sustainability-struggle-lingers-post-covid/>)

In the United Nations' Race to Zero campaign, where businesses and local governors pledge action towards net-zero emissions by 2050, only 81 out of over 12,500 entities are in the healthcare sector. In contrast, there are 662 financial firms in the campaign, along with over 1,100 city governments.



New UN data platform highlights impacts of sand mining

The first-ever global data platform to map out dredging activities finds that the growing pace of marine sand extraction, driven by Asia, is nearing the natural sand replenishment rate needed to maintain vital marine ecosystems, writes **Gabrielle See**

The first-ever global data platform to map out dredging activities finds that the growing pace of marine sand extraction, driven by Asia, is nearing the natural sand replenishment rate needed to maintain vital marine ecosystems

tems. The marine dredging industry extracts six billion tonnes of sand from the world's oceans each year, or the equivalent of a wall of 10 metre high by 10 metre wide around the Earth annually, according to the new United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) data platform

Marine Sand Watch which launched on Tuesday (5 September).

Based on the analysis of data between 2012 and 2019, the extraction rate of sand and other sediments – estimated by the Marine Sand Watch to be between four and eight billion tonnes – is approaching

the natural replenishment rate of 10 to 16 billion tonnes per year needed to maintain coastal and marine ecosystem function.

This is especially concerning for Asia, where most of the world's sand is being extracted. For instance, sand mining in Vietnam's Mekong Delta – built up by 6,000 years of silt deposits – has led to sinking land and coastal erosion.

Despite the intensity of dredging in Southeast Asia, the platform is currently unable to track mining activity in the region, as many countries do not require dredging vessels to emit Automatic Identification System (AIS) signals, said Arnaud Vander Velpen, sand industry and data analytics officer, Global Resource Information Database (GRID-Geneva), the centre for analytics for UNEP at the press conference. These signals are used to identify a ship's real time position and to map out mining in sand concessions, offloading locations, maintenance dredging and other types of activities like land reclamation on the platform.

Given that artisanal and small-scale mining along very shallow coastlines is done with small boats

that do not transmit AIS, Vander Velpen added that Marine Sand Watch will need to use other types of technologies, like remote sensing drones and lifecycle analysis to detect the amount of sand being used.

"The scale of environmental impacts of shallow sea mining activities and dredging is alarming, including biodiversity, water turbidity, and noise impacts on marine mammals," said Pascal Peduzzi, director of GRID-Geneva, which developed the platform with support from the University of Geneva, the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment.

"This data signals the urgent need for better management of marine sand resources and to reduce the impacts of shallow sea mining," added Peduzzi. "UNEP invites all stakeholders, member states and the dredging sector to consider sand as a strategic material, and to swiftly engage in talks on how to improve dredging standards around the world."

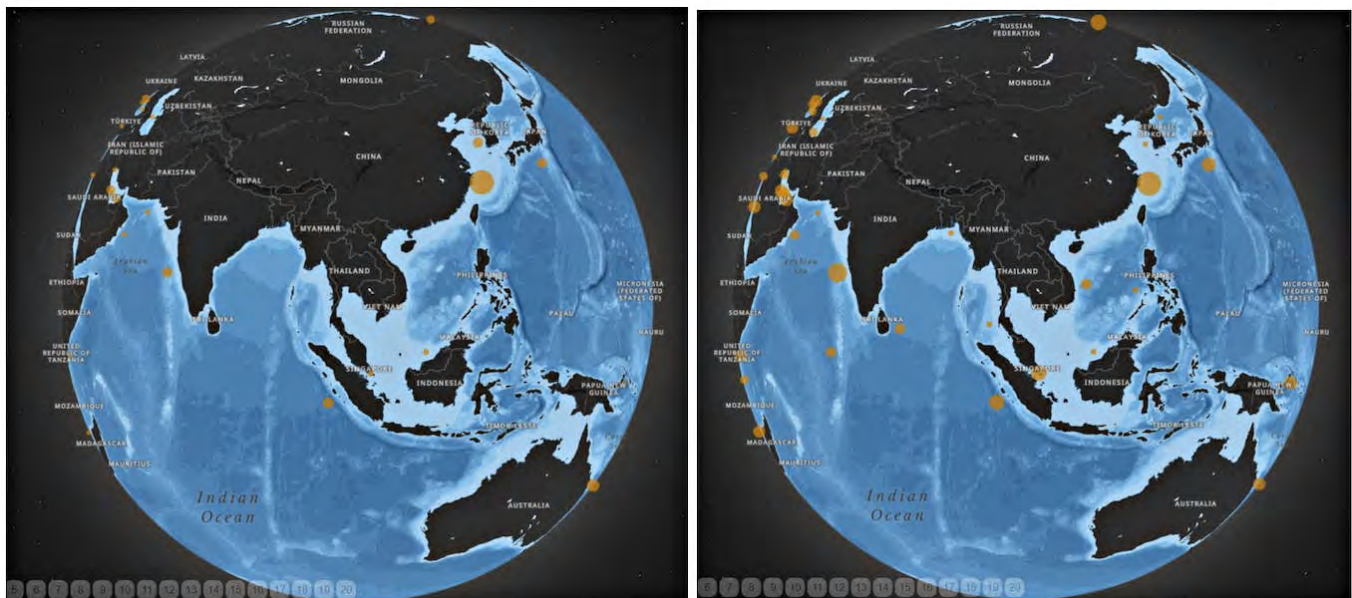
Asia is home to the largest consumers of the world's most-exploited resource after water for construction and land reclamation. China

– which helped to build Sri Lanka's Colombo Port City on reclaimed land, an effort that required about 65 million cubic metres of sand – alone accounts for the use of half of the world's sand for building its infrastructure, Peduzzi told Eco-Business. According to data from the Singapore Land Authority, Singapore has also increased its land area by more than 25 per cent since the 1970s using sand imported from neighbouring countries.

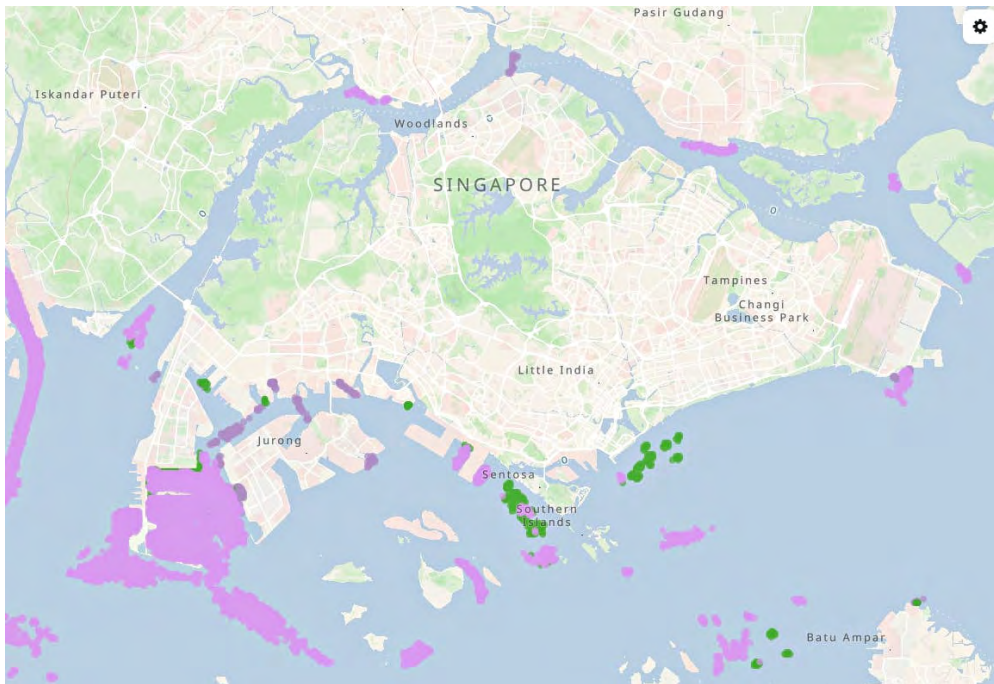
In its report last year, UNEP called for better monitoring of sand extraction and use, the ban of sand extraction near beaches and an international standard on sand extraction.

Following the launch of Marine Sand Watch, GRID-Geneva will be attending a global consultation with member states around the UN Environment Assembly's resolution to strengthen scientific, technical and policy knowledge on sand, among other minerals and metals that are widely extracted.

"I assume that a lot of countries are interested [in the tool] because it is their resources, they need to manage it for the long term," said Peduzzi. "We also want to use this to initiate discussion with the



Estimated sand dredging activities, represented by orange circles, in the exclusive economic zones of countries in Asia Pacific in 2012 (left), compared to 2019 (right). The bigger the circle, the larger the volume of sediment extracted. Image: Marine Sand Watch



Identified dredging activity up until 2019 near Singapore by trailing suction hopper dredgers (in pink), which are involved in all types of dredging activities, and cutter suction dredgers (in green), which are mainly used in land creation and deepening of new waterways. Image: Marine Sand Watch

dredging industry.” While countries like Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam have banned marine sand exports in the last two decades, others lack any legislation or effective monitoring programmes thus far. However, it remains unclear how effective national policies are to deter unsustainable sand extraction and use.

Earlier this year, Indonesia lifted its 2003 ban on exporting sand

dredged from the sea, a move that was criticised by environmental activists and marine experts for serving business interests at the expense of marine ecosystems and fishing communities. Before the ban, the archipelago was a major supplier of sea sand to Singapore for land reclamation, shipping over 150 million tonnes between 1997 and 2002.

Extraction of this globally demanded commodity drives bio-

diversity loss and exposes coastal communities to rising sea levels and storms. Shallow sea mining for sand and gravel, also referred to as marine sand, exacerbates flood risk by removing natural barriers to storm surge and undermines support for biodiversity, fisheries and other blue economy activities.

Apart from being used in construction and land reclamation, marine sand is also used to deepen waterways and build harbours, replenish beaches, build coastal defenses and support offshore energy infrastructure like wind and sand turbines.

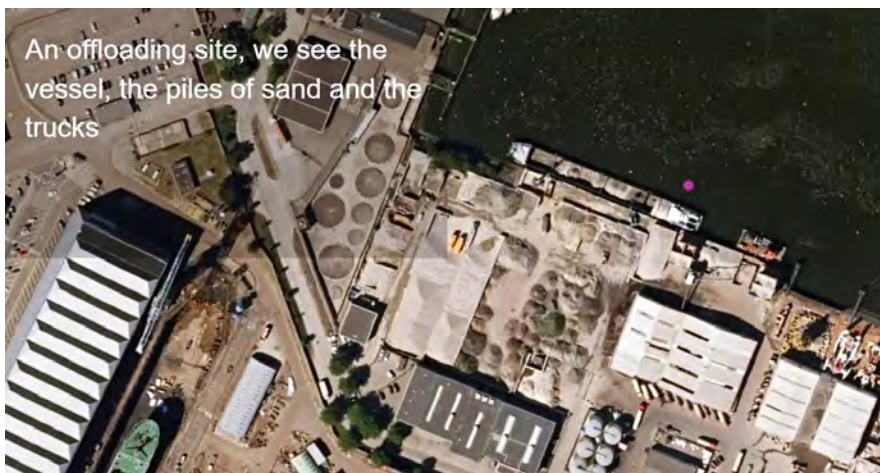
“Nobody knew how much sand was taken out of the oceans and we want

to answer that question through this platform,” said Peduzzi.

The platform currently monitors large vessels dredging sand, clay, silt, gravel and rock in the world’s marine environment, including hotspots like the North Sea, South-east Asia, and the East Coast of the United States, up until 2019. Peduzzi said that Marine Sand Watch aims to improve its algorithms to calculate how much sand is being extracted as “not all sediments are sand”.

In the next few months, the platform will also be adding additional data all the way up to 2023, said Vander Velpen. In the meantime, there are plans to develop an updated version to move towards near real-time monitoring which will also be able to fully detect all existing dredging vessels, as well as to better differentiate between the types of vessels and dredging activities. 📍

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/new-un-data-platform-highlights-impacts-of-sand-mining/>)



A zoomed in satellite image of an offloading site near Schiedam in the Netherlands.

Image: Marine Sand Watch



China dominates the clean-tech supply chain, especially in critical materials such as gallium, and has overseen the development of low-cost components for solar panels, wind turbines, and other technologies.

Image: Asian Development Bank, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

CLOSING THE CLEAN TECH GAP

Despite the challenges of addressing climate change, technology and innovation are accelerating the net-zero transition, states **Benedict Macon-Cooney** and **Tone Langengen**

In the debate about how to curb global warming, climate action is often confused for climate justice. Many European countries (including the United Kingdom) have taken to self-flagellation, atoning for their long history of burning fossil fuels by attempting to decarbonise their domestic economies as quickly as possible, no matter the cost.

There is no question that European governments should meet their emissions-reduction targets. But climate change is a global problem, and industrialised countries should achieve these targets by enacting practical policies and developing technological solutions that drive economic growth at home while also supporting the green-energy transition abroad.

To be sure, the developed world has historically been responsible for much of the environmental damage done to the planet, owing largely to early industrialisation. Until 2000, the United States and Europe produced nearly 70 per cent of global carbon dioxide emissions. Yet the largest annual emitters have changed rapidly in recent years, as many countries have decoupled economic growth from emissions.

For example, the UK – the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution – now accounts for around 1 per cent of global CO₂ emissions, while China is responsible for more than 30 per cent. Our estimates show the UK's

emissions dropping to 0.6 per cent of the global total by 2030, with China's share rising to more than 36 per cent.

The sins of the past should not crowd out a clear-eyed climate strategy, especially in the UK and the European Union. Demonstrating serious commitment to the net-zero transition is an important signal to the rest of the world, but these governments must also ensure that they take an approach that charts a path to a better future for all. Otherwise, they risk being left behind as other countries assume global leadership on the climate challenge, which is as much scientific and technological as it is political.

The US recognised this and enacted the multi-billion-dollar Inflation Reduction Act, which has accelerated investment in clean-energy technologies, including in research and development. In the year since the bill was passed, nearly 80 major clean-energy factories have been announced. Likewise, China dominates the clean-tech supply chain, especially in critical materials such as gallium, and has overseen the development of low-cost components for solar panels, wind turbines, and other technologies.

But rather than pursuing aggressive industrial policies to build clean technology, UK politicians have focused on minor matters, including such trivialities as UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's flying habits. European politicians, meanwhile, have wasted time squabbling over nuclear energy: in response to Germany's exit from nuclear power, Mélanie Vogel, member of the French Senate and co-chair of the European Green Party, tweeted, "Sex is good, but have you tried having your country shutting down its last nuclear power plants in 30 minutes?"

The EU's Green Deal, although a step in the right direction, is nowhere near as ambitious as it needs to be. Moreover, European countries haven't made the requisite

leap forward in scientific and technological innovation, whereas the US has remained a global leader. The UK, for its part, is still struggling to find its post-Brexit economic footing.

European countries and the UK must put clean-tech innovation at the top of the agenda, alongside artificial intelligence and biotech. Policy-makers should focus on technologies and solutions – including electricity generation and storage, carbon capture, and nuclear fission and fusion – that will help countries worldwide replace fossil fuels with cheap and convenient renewable energy.

To this end, the UK and European countries must increase and better allocate capital spending (it is telling that Amazon's R&D budget exceeds the state expenditure on R&D of every European country). Increased funding, as well as planning and research reforms, are essential for building an innovation ecosystem that fosters "frontier firms" (the 100 companies in each sector with the fastest productivity growth). Europe's competitiveness as a base for industry continues to decline, underscoring the need for concerted action.

Given that China has established a commanding lead in manufac-

turing low-cost green technologies, as evidenced by the growing number of Chinese electric vehicles on European roads, the UK and the EU should seek to exploit opportunities in "last-mile" solutions. Full decarbonisation of the UK power sector, for example, will have a relatively minor impact on emissions, but developing innovative ways to use renewables would enable other countries to do the same more easily and cheaply. The challenges of materials science, particularly in hard-to-abate sectors such as cement, should excite researchers and young entrepreneurs.

This shift in focus would contribute to the development of new tools to combat climate change worldwide. It would also move domestic debates away from personal sacrifices toward the potential of climate action to nurture internal sources of innovation, drive economic growth, and create jobs, while benefiting from greater influence on the global stage.

Despite the challenges of addressing climate change, technology and innovation are accelerating the net-zero transition. But the UK and European governments must focus on contributing to these solutions, which means emphasizing growth over sacrifice and cultivating widespread buy-in rather than casting blame. The current approach of downplaying the importance of global emissions-reduction efforts and exaggerating the impact of domestic climate action, taken in isolation, puts us all on the wrong path. 

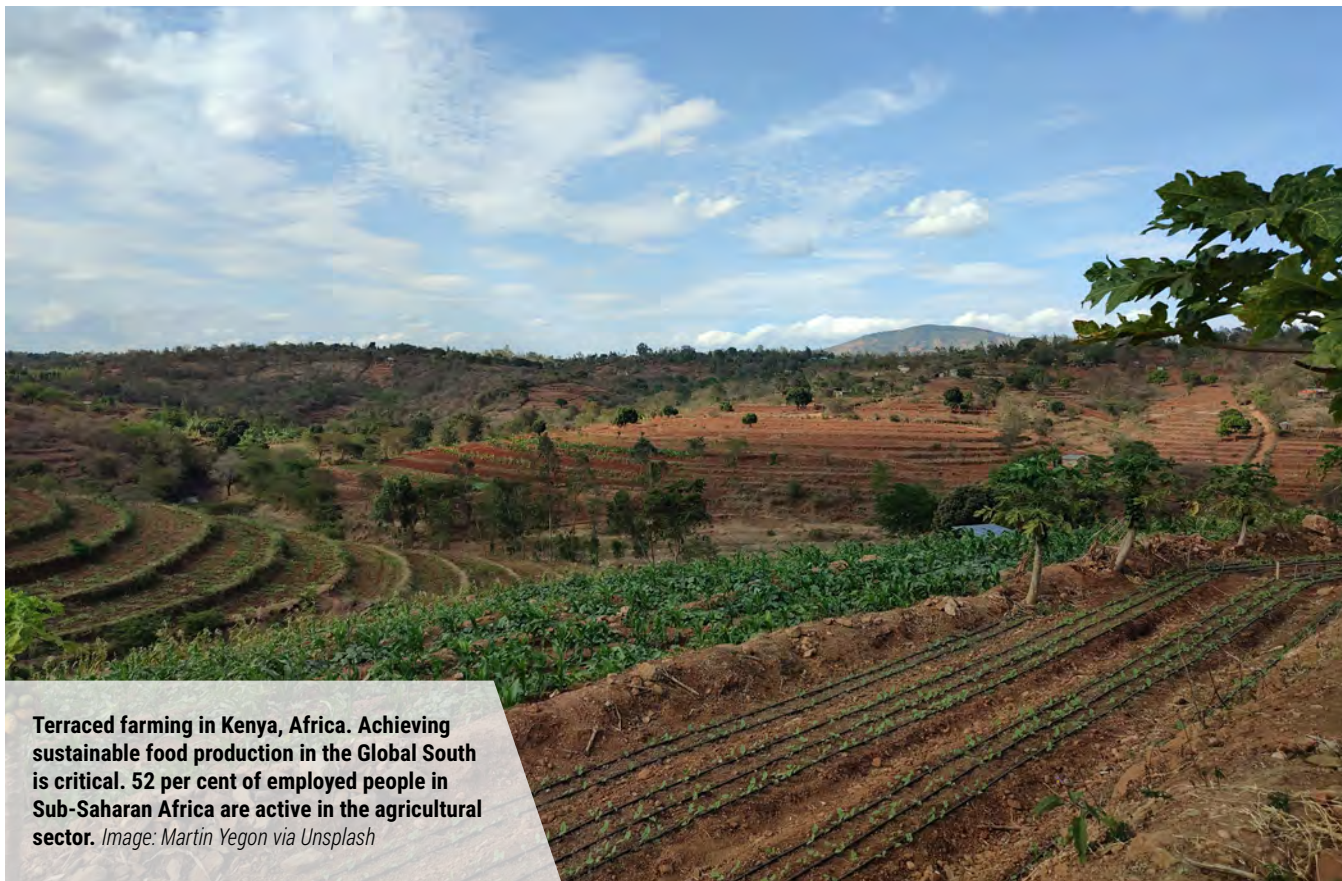
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Benedict Macon-Cooney, a former economist at the UK Treasury and adviser to Tony Blair, is Chief Policy Strategist at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. Tone Langengen is a senior policy adviser at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change.

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Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/closing-the-clean-tech-gap/>



THE KEY TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Achieving zero hunger, one of the Sustainable Development Goals, requires meeting another SDG: ensuring access to modern energy. In particular, the future of agriculture in the Global South depends on distributed renewable-energy solutions to address the challenges faced by smallholder farmers, writes

Kristina Skierka and Aisha Mohammed Mussa

The fabric of our global food system is fraying under the strain of climate change and an ever-expanding popu-

lation. To prevent it from unraveling, we must embrace distributed renewable-energy solutions, which are critical for reducing greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions,

boosting resilience and productivity, and cutting costs. Failure to do so would jeopardise efforts to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

and threaten our very survival. Halfway to the 2030 deadline, progress toward the SDGs – conceived as a “shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet” – is lagging significantly. In July, the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York and the UN Food Systems Summit +2 Stocktaking Moment in Rome underscored the importance of ensuring access to modern energy (SDG 7) and achieving zero hunger (SDG 2), respectively.

When it comes to strengthening the long-term resilience and adaptability of the global food system, these two objectives are interlinked. Translating this into public policies has taken on new urgency, given that rapid global warming, population growth, public-health crises, volatile energy markets, and conflict have exposed the food system’s unique vulnerabilities and shortcomings.

Past solutions and approaches will no longer work; on the contrary, they contributed to the current problems. Previously, concerns about food supply – including high prices during the 2008 global financial crisis – invariably led to agricultural intensification and mechanisation, as well as an increase in land use. As a result, agribusiness (including the production, transport, and storage of food) today accounts for roughly one-third of all GHG emissions, which in turn threaten the future of agriculture.

While the effects of climate change are felt throughout the global food system, they are disproportionately borne by those least responsible for the problem: smallholder farmers in the Global South. For example, Sub-Saharan Africa, which relies on rainfed agriculture, already experiences one-third of the world’s droughts and is vulnerable to higher temperatures and other extreme weather. The International Monetary Fund has found

that a single drought can lower an African country’s medium-term economic-growth potential by one percentage point.

That conclusion reflects agriculture’s central role in the developing world: in some of the least-developed countries, it accounts for more than 25 per cent of GDP, while 52 per cent of employed people in Sub-Saharan Africa are active in the sector. Given this, achieving sustainable and climate-friendly food production in the Global South could lead to significant welfare improvements. This will require a shift to distributed renewable energy, which can be used in primary production, post-harvest processing, storage, and cooking – the agricultural activities that tend to consume the most energy in developing countries.

To be sure, decentralised renewable energy is not a panacea. But it could contribute significantly to stabilising the global food system by lowering energy costs, a crucial factor for boosting productivity; by facilitating financing for productive applications, which could democratise access to yield-enhancing technologies; and by reducing GHG emissions and promoting climate-change adaptation. Last but not least, reducing reliance on fossil fuels and decentralising energy production can help shift global power dynamics within the food system.

Solar-powered irrigation, for example, has significantly improved water access and enabled multiple cropping cycles, increasing productivity and reducing GHG emissions. Solar-powered pumps have boosted farmers’ incomes by more than 50 per cent in India and led to significant increases in yields in Rwanda. The Ethiopian Ministry of Irrigation and Lowlands – which one of us heads – recently banned the import of diesel irrigation pumps to support the rapid transition to renewable-energy solutions.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, solar milling machines could make grinding grain into flour more efficient, affordable, and sustainable. Additionally, the expansion of mini-grids to power post-harvest processes can bring more economic and environmental benefits by enabling communities to preserve their produce locally.

Cold storage and refrigeration are crucial for extending shelf life, reducing food loss, and maintaining product quality. Decentralised cold-storage solutions that are powered by renewable energy could improve market access and reduce spoilage for smallholder farmers and remote communities. By converting existing infrastructure to renewable energy sources, we can cut GHG emissions and make cold chains more environmentally friendly and affordable.

All the above examples demonstrate the diverse applications of distributed renewable energy, and each solution contributes to a more resilient, sustainable, and climate-friendly food system. By scaling up these innovations, we can address the energy challenges faced by smallholder farmers, processors, and consumers while reducing our carbon footprint.

Reinforcing the fabric of our global food system requires a new framework designed to reduce land use, enhance productivity, minimise food loss, and cut GHG emissions. Renewable energy must be its foundation. Otherwise, developing countries will be unable to raise agricultural yields and end hunger, stop and reverse environmental degradation, or democratise energy access. ■

Kristina Skierka is CEO of Power for All.

Aisha Mohammed Mussa is Minister of Irrigation and Lowlands of Ethiopia.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/the-key-to-sustainable-food-systems/>)



MBRDI's 5-Year Clean Green Nandi Project Enhances Biodiversity, Clears 46,000 Kgs of Waste

Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India Pvt Ltd (MBRDI) has successfully completed its 'Clean Green Nandi' project, a five-year initiative aimed at restoring the natural splendour of Nandi Hills, Bengaluru, in addition to helping enhance the livelihoods

of the local community. Initiated in 2018, the project was in response to the heightened tourist footfall at the hills, which led to pressing issues of pollution, soil erosion and deforestation resulting in drying up of life-sustaining rivers and the accumulation of plastic waste in the area. Scientifically approached through

a topological survey and a holistic study, MBRDI undertook efforts to restore water bodies, set up waste collection infrastructure, influence visitor behaviour and protect the biodiversity of Nandi Hills. MBRDI's sustained efforts have resulted in the collection and management of 46,000 Kgs of waste, 85 Lakh litres



of pooled water, construction of 11 check dams and a 3% reduction in plastic generation.

“At MBRDI, we integrate sustainability into every facet of our operations. Aligned with the global sustainability agenda of Mercedes-Benz, our endeavours aim to create a positive influence on the lives of local communities and the surrounding environment. The ‘Clean Green Nandi’ project is an exemplary

demonstration of our dedication to advancing environmental sustainability and fostering social cohesion,” said Shweta Pandey, Vice President and General Counsel, MBRDI.

Integrating employee volunteering into the project, over 500 MBRDI employees clocked in close to 5,000 volunteering hours conducting tree plantations and clean-up drives, further restoring the natural balance of the hills.

MBRDI undertook a 45-day training program for local women, teaching them innovative ways to transform uprooted Lantana stems into eco-friendly household products. The project cleared 60 acres of Lantana, an invasive weed that poses a critical threat to biodiversity and empowered women to earn sustainable livelihoods through a Self-Help Group.

In tandem with the ecological efforts, MBRDI also engaged in the conservation and protection of cultural heritage at Nandi Hills. The restoration of the Armory at the hilltop, creation of accessible pathways and the installation of informative boards have enhanced visitor awareness about the historical significance of the location.

In line with global ambitions, sustainability is a crucial driver of business strategy at MBRDI. Corporate Social Responsibility efforts are centred around the pillars of Sustainable Mobility and Environmental Sustainability with a clear focus on creating value that is sustainable – economically, ecologically, and socially. 🌱



MIGRATION

TIES TO 'HOME' ARE KEY FOR HIMALAYAN COMMUNITIES THAT STAY DESPITE CLIMATE RISKS

Having strong ties to home is the most frequently given reason why people continue to stay in Himalayan villages facing the impacts of climate change, according to a new study.

Aruna Chandrasekhar writes about the issue.

The research focuses on the north Indian state of Uttarakhand, which is still reeling from the impacts of floods and landslides that struck last month. Growing coverage of climate migration has focused mainly on where, when and how many people will migrate due to climate change in the future, while those who stay in the face of risks are often perceived as “stuck” or “left behind”.

The study, published in *Climate and Development*, looks at voluntary and involuntary “immobility” in a region where migration is high because of economic and aspirational reasons, as well as development disparities.

Climate change is adding to these migration pressures as subsistence agriculture grows more unstable, the study says. Respondents reported higher temperatures, erratic rainfall, reduced snowfall and crop losses.

Those that choose to stay pointed to a lack of support on how to adapt to a changing climate, including help on what crops to grow, better infrastructure and alternative employment. The lead author tells Carbon Brief that remaining residents do not see migration as a form of adaptation, but are “wanting to stay where they are” and are “looking for information, solutions and political will, so they can stay in the places that they call home”. However, other experts argue that the different driving forces around migration are more complex, telling Carbon Brief that very few forms of migration in the state “can be tethered solely to environmental events”.

Mountain state

Uttarakhand is a state in the Indian Himalayan region that borders China in the north and Nepal in the east. Elevations range from 190 metres to 7,816 metres, from the Sharda Sagar reservoir on the Mahakali river to the snow-clad peaks of Nanda Devi – once thought to be the tallest mountain in the world.

Uttarakhand has 10 largely rural hill districts and three urban ones. Most of the state’s growth in industry, employment, higher education and health services has been limited to the urban plains districts, sparking migration from the mountains.

Since 86 per cent of the terrain is mountainous, farmland is scarce – yet 70 per cent of the state population depends on subsistence agriculture. Soils are poor and farmers rely primarily on rainfall. Stone fruit, such as pears and apples, as well as spices, flowers and off-season vegetables are key crops in the hills, besides staple grains.

According to a 2019 assessment by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) on future risk and vulnerability, Uttarakhand is at “very high risk” of climate change impacts. Between 2020 and 2049, the report projects that there will be an increase in both extreme rainfall events and drought in nearly all districts, as well as summer temperatures 4C hotter than recent decades. And rapid glacier retreat is

According to India’s 2011 census, more than 1,000 of the state’s 17,000 villages are “uninhabited”, while nearly 80 per cent have fewer than 500 people. This data is far from current: for the first time in the country’s history, the decadal census for 2021 has been delayed.

But the mass migration of people out of these ghost villages “doesn’t mean that there aren’t people here and people choosing to remain”, says

Uttarakhand has 10 largely rural hill districts and three urban ones. Most of the state’s growth in industry, employment, higher education and health services has been limited to the urban plains districts, sparking migration from the mountains.

heightening the risk of severe floods and landslide hazards.

Climate impacts – including declines in crop yields, native biodiversity and soil health – are an “additional stress” for subsistence farmers in the Himalaya, according to the study.

Migration shift

Seasonal migration from Uttarakhand has traditionally been high, both as a part of the nomadic nature of pastoral agriculture in the mountains and also to diversify livelihoods. But this has since morphed into families being split across different locations to earn a living, followed by permanent family migration.

This rising depopulation has led to the development of so-called “ghost” villages, where the number of residents drops to barely a hundred or so – although some experts tell Carbon Brief that the term overlooks those who stay.

Himani Upadhyay, the lead author of the new study and a researcher at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and PhD candidate at Humboldt University.

To understand these shifts, the researchers conducted more than 70 interviews with affected communities in Uttarakhand and experts in New Delhi to better understand the climate and socio-cultural context of the region.

The study finds that unreliable agricultural production due to climate change has led to an increase in outgoing migration.

It identifies five main factors that contribute to decisions to stay: attachment to a place; specific natural resources and other livelihood advantages; social environment; gender roles; and dependence on subsistence agriculture.

Reasons for staying

Strong emotional bonds to a place was the most-often cited reason to

stay, given by more than half of the interviewees.

A clear preference for home, comfort and community – even when things are uncomfortable, and despite opportunities to leave – highlights “how immobility is rooted in personal beliefs and shaped by local factors”, the researchers point out.

Place attachment also includes a preference for the mountain environment and its better air and water quality, food and bigger living spaces. One interviewee, who had lived for three years in Delhi, told the researchers:

“People from here migrate to Delhi, where the air is so polluted that you have to wear face masks. There are mosquitoes; there is a lot of heat and noise. What kind of a life is that?”

Some interviewees highlighted a preference for a “free and independent” life in a village compared to one in a “matchbox cit[y]”, where they might be dependent on their migrant children or looked down upon. While 95 per cent of people interviewed were involved in agriculture, the study finds that more than half of surveyed men had another occupation – unlike women, who were almost exclusively dependent on agriculture and government pensions.

For men, this additional source of income was cited as a chief reason for staying, leading the researchers to conclude that these extra income

streams make them less vulnerable to climate change than women.

Climate impacts observed by study respondents include higher temperatures, erratic rainfall and reduced snowfall. Ten interviewees said they had endured crop losses because they did not have the resources to mitigate the losses. Only three respondents had access to crop insurance.

Environment and employment

The study also finds that the expectation to migrate was largely on young men. Finding work and success in cities is seen as a rite of passage and upward mobility for these men, it says. The authors identify middle-aged and elderly people as those who are more likely to remain; however, they only conducted three interviews with people between the ages of 18 and 30, potentially skewing this result.

Some respondents told the authors they would like to stay, but that deteriorating environmental factors, such as the drying of mountain springs, would force them to migrate. These people “did not anticipate any government or aid institutions coming to help them adapt”, Upadhyay tells Carbon Brief. She adds:

“There was this very old woman who said ‘I have to take my medicine and I don’t have any water in the house, so I have to wait till 2pm until

my grandchildren will come and they can go further away to fetch me some water’...These were the people who said that ‘we want to stay because pretty soon, a time will come when we will be forced to migrate’.”

For five of the interviewees who wanted to migrate, leaving was not an option, with a lack of resources, skills and access to migrant networks holding them back.

The authors identify a range of reasons for staying, shaped by an individual’s aspirations and capability. Some had the desire and means to stay, while others aspired to leave but could not afford to.

The graphic below depicts degrees of voluntary and involuntary immobility, from those with the capability to stay (left) to those who do not wish to stay but cannot leave (right).

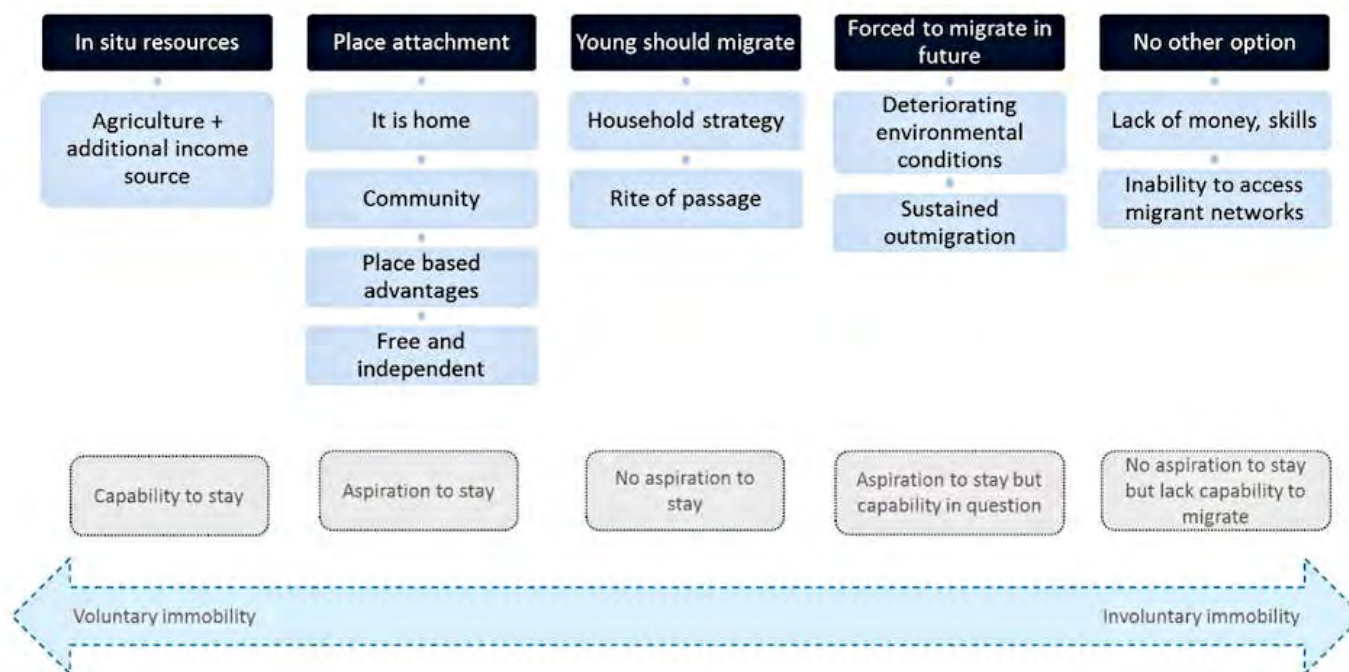
But choosing to stay does not mean someone is not vulnerable.

Interviewees who stayed were just as concerned by increasing climate impacts, declining labour availability and a lack of attention from their government. They sought support on how to adapt where they were, including information on what to grow in a changing climate, better infrastructure and alternative employment. But, Upadhyay says, as villages began to empty, government support and presence withdrew. She tells Carbon Brief that “public institutions were shutting shop: roads were not getting fixed, no teacher” came to the village.

Limitations

The researchers admit that they could not investigate the role remittances, caste and income played in determining who stayed and why, but urge follow-up research in these areas. Dr Ritodhi Chakraborty at the University of Canterbury, who was not involved in the study, tells Carbon Brief that while he was “happy to see more qualitative work in this space”, the study “sorely misses representing more inter-

Once migration has started, it becomes very difficult to stop the flow, thereby bringing second generation challenges. It is of utmost importance to undertake anticipatory adaptation rather than reacting to changes.



sectional subjects” by “relying on binary frameworks such as old and young, mobility and immobility”. It also does not reflect the variations in climate across the state, he says.

Chakraborty also says that the assessment of risk is “a little myopic”. He points out that among those who leave are “migrant men working in hellish urban heat islands in Delhi” and that it was primarily migrant workers who died inside the hydropower installations during the 2021 flood. He adds:

“This idea that somehow only rain-fed agricultural labour puts people in more risky climatic settings is not true.”

According to Chakraborty, focusing on households, instead of villages, could have made for a different analysis because “for most families, mobility of the household is critical for adaptation”.

In addition, he points out, declining village populations are not occurring just as a consequence of climate change, but also due to spatial restructuring – villages coming together to form larger villages – and land acquisition by the state, the wealthy and corporations. To him, pahari (mountain-dwelling) women

face “much greater” burdens than climate change, such as having to be both modern and traditional at the same time.

Dr Amina Maharjan of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development, who was also not involved in the paper, tells Carbon Brief that the study counters the “generalised” narrative that people will move when climate change impacts the habitability of their home.

Future climate migration studies, she says, should consider the well-being of migrants, migrant households and immobile populations, adding that these people “are connected and need to be studied together”. Maharjan says that an important consideration not covered by the paper is that the lack of timely adaptation interventions will make migration a necessity. She adds:

“Once migration has started, it becomes very difficult to stop the flow, thereby bringing second generation challenges. It is of utmost importance to undertake anticipatory adaptation rather than reacting to changes.”

Upadhyay points to land ownership as a specific vulnerability for

women trying to adapt to climate impacts. “[Women] work so hard on the land, but until recently, they don’t own the land. [If] there is a disaster, then the compensation is paid to the [owner], often men.”

The authors say that their findings have wider relevance to subsistence farming communities where women and older people stay despite climate pressures.

And neither leaving nor staying is sufficient as an effective climate adaptation strategy, the authors assert. Upadhyay says:

“All this work that has been done on adaptation: what is it for, if a managed retreat or migration is the only solution [we can find]?”

“[These people] were not looking at migration as sort of an adaptation strategy. They were wanting to stay where they are and they were looking for information, solutions and political will, so they can stay in the places that they call home.”

This story was published with permission from Carbon Brief.

(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/migration-ties-to-home-are-key-for-himalayan-communities-that-stay-despite-climate-risks/>)



Bayer CropScience's Farmer Voice Survey reveals that more than 70% of farmers have already seen large impacts of climate change on their farm, across 8 countries

Seventy-one per cent of farmers say that climate change already has a large impact on their farm, and even more are worried about the impact this will have in the future. Around 73% have experienced increasing pest and disease pressure. On average farmers estimate that their incomes had reduced by 15.7% due to climate change in the past two years. One in six farmers even identifies income losses of over 25% during this period.

These are some of the key findings from the "Farmer Voice" survey, published today, which reveals the challenges facing farmers around the world as they try to mitigate the impacts of climate change and adapt for the future. To conduct the "Farmer Voice", life science company Bayer commissioned an agency to independently interview 800 farmers globally, representing farms large and small from Australia, Brazil, China, Germany, India, Kenya, Ukraine, and the United States in equal numbers.

Farmers expect the repercussions of climate change to continue. Three-quarters of them globally (76%) are worried about the impact that climate change will have on their farm, with farmers in Kenya and India most concerned. Rodrigo Santos, Member of the Board of Management of Bayer AG and President of the Crop Science Division, commented: "Farmers are already experiencing the adverse effects of climate change on their fields and at the same time they play a key role in tackling this huge challenge. This is why it is so

important to put their voice front and center. The losses reported in this survey make the direct threat climate change poses to global food security crystal clear. In the face of a growing world population, the results must be a catalyst for efforts to make agriculture regenerative.”

Economic challenges are compounding farmer pressures

While climate change is a dominant overarching theme, economic challenges are the biggest priority over the next three years. Over half (55%) of farmers placed fertilizer costs among the top three challenges, followed by energy costs (47%), price and income volatility (37%), and the cost of crop protection (36%). The importance of fertilizer costs becomes most apparent in Kenya, India, and Ukraine.

In Ukraine, 70% of farmers named fertilizer costs as one of the top three challenges, showing that the concrete materialized consequences of the war pose big pressures on farmers in the country. In addition, 40% named general disruption due to war and conflict as a top challenge. Apart from that Ukrainian farmers share many of the same characteristics of their global peers, for example more than three-quarters (77%) state that climate change has already largely impacted their farm.

Farmers are taking steps to mitigate climate change and value innovation

More than 80% of surveyed farmers are already taking or planning to take steps to directly apply measures to reduce greenhouse gases. The top focus areas are using cover crops (43% do so already or intend to do so), using renewable energy or biofuels (37%) and using innovative seeds to reduce fertilizer or crop protection use (33%). Alongside this, every farmer claims to already apply

or plans to apply measures to help biodiversity. Over half (54%) say they already apply measures to protect insects, such as insect hotels, or plan to do so in the next three years.

To be ready for the future, farmers value innovation. Over half (53%) of them say access to seeds and traits designed to better cope with extreme weather would most benefit their farm. A similar number (50%) called for better crop protection technology. 42% said that better access to irrigation technology would benefit their farm. Looking at their practices, improving efficient land use, diversifying crops, and better soil health were ranked as the most important routes to success.

Spotlight: Indian smallholder farmers are focused on mitigating risk

In addition to the global survey where farmers were interviewed independently, Bayer interviewed 2,056 Indian smallholder farmers from its customer base. It is a unique glimpse into the perspectives of smallholders who are key to securing the world's food supply. Currently, their biggest challenges are high labor and fertilizer costs. Yet they are also impacted by climate change: Many of them expect reduced crop yields (42%) and higher pest pressures because of changing weather (31%). Unlike commercial and large-scale growers, the smallholders interviewed in India are focused on mitigating risks, prioritizing financial security through insurance (26%) and infrastructure (21%).

When asked about the future, 60% said they would benefit most from access to digital technologies and modern crop protection. Despite all the challenges, Indian smallholders remain optimistic: 8 in every 10 farmers feel positive about the future of farming.

The survey results are a valuable indicator of smallholder priorities

and needs in India, contributing to Bayer's smallholder farming strategy with the goal to support 100 million smallholders by 2030. In 2022, the company reached 52 million with its products and services.

Farmers agree on global challenges

Overall, the “Farmer Voice” survey shows that farmers around the world largely share a common view about the challenges of today and the prospects for the future. While there are slight differences between countries, the overarching issues of climate change and economic pressures are of similar concern to all. “Farmers are facing multiple and related challenges. But despite this, we found that they are hopeful – almost three-quarters say they feel positive about the future of farming in their country,” said Rodrigo Santos. “This is impressive and encouraging. The views expressed by farmers in the report need to be widely seen and understood. They are a call to action for the entire food system to innovate, collaborate, and deliver the solutions farmers need – and we as Bayer are eager to play a leading role in these efforts. There is little time to waste.” 

The Farmer Voice is a survey among 800 farmers equally split between Australia, Brazil, China, Germany, India, Kenya, Ukraine, and the United States. The survey was conducted independently by Kekst CNC. Farmers were selected randomly from each market. The respondents did not know that the survey was being conducted on behalf of Bayer until it was complete, and Bayer had no input on the sample selection. Interviews took place between April and July 2023. Additionally, 2,056 smallholder farmers in India were surveyed with a shortened questionnaire. These farmers were associated with the Better Life Farming ecosystem, farmers of Bayer-supported Farmer Producer Organizations, and farmers enrolled in Bayer's Sustainable Rice Program. These interviews were conducted between May and June 2023.



Wildfire severity, which considers the ecosystem impacts caused by a fire, rose eight-fold between 1985 and 2017 in the forests of the western United States - including in badly affected California, research finds.

Image: Dusty J, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

HOW CAN WE PREVENT WILDFIRE DISASTERS?

Deadly wildfires on Maui island come weeks after fires linked to climate change caused devastation in Canada and Greece. Can anything be done to stop them?

The deadliest US wildfires in over a century have killed more than 100 people in Hawaii, destroyed or damaged more than 2,200 buildings and caused an estimated US\$5.5 billion in losses, grabbing global headlines about the effects of climate change.

The Maui wildfire ravaged the resort town of Lahaina in August, charring a 5 square-mile (13 square-km) area in hours and burning so ferociously that even metal structures melted.

The Hawaii disaster came soon after wildfires drove tourists to flee their hotels in Greece and major

cities were blanketed in smoke from blazes in Canada, where fires have engulfed parts of nearly all 13 provinces and territories this year.

Wildfires are increasing in frequency and severity across the world, found a May 2023 report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a group of 38 countries.

The duration of the fire weather season has lengthened by 27 per cent globally since 1979 and wildfires have become more frequent,

OECD researchers said. In Australia, for example, wildfire frequency has doubled since 1980.

Here is what researchers have found out about wildfires world-wide:

How bad are forest fires today?

As wildfires become more common in many regions, the occurrence of extreme wildfires – in terms of their size, duration, intensity and impacts – is also on the rise, the OECD researchers said.

Wildfire severity, which considers the ecosystem impacts caused by a fire, rose eight-fold between 1985 and 2017 in the forests of the western United States - including in badly affected California, the research found.

It said unsustainable land-use practices such as forest clearing and drying out of peatlands for agricultural expansion, especially monoculture farming, have also affected natural ecosystems' resilience to wildfires. Forest fires now cause about 3 million more hectares of tree cover loss each year than they did in 2001, researchers at the University of Maryland and monitoring service Global Forest Watch (GFW) said last year.

These fires accounted for more than a quarter of all tree cover loss over the past two decades.

What causes wildfires and what are the lasting impacts?

Climate change is a major reason for the increase in fires, with extreme heatwaves five times more likely now than 150 years ago and expected to become even more frequent as the planet continues to warm.

Higher temperatures dry out forests and landscapes to create the ideal environment for larger, more frequent forest fires. This results in higher CO2 emissions, further exacerbating climate change and in turn contributing to more fires.

Climate change is estimated to have doubled the total forest area burned in the western United States between 1984 and 2015, the OECD report said.

The extreme fire weather that facilitated the devastating 2019/20 wildfires in Australia was estimated to be at least 30 per cent more likely because of climate change.

But in most cases, human activity such as agricultural expansion, power cables, camp fires or deliberate arson, is responsible for nearly 70 per cent of the total burned area globally, OECD researchers said.

Deforestation and the drainage of peatlands worsen drought conditions and increase landscape flammability - contributing to the occurrence of extreme wildfires in countries such as Brazil and Indonesia, the OECD report added.

Certain forestry practices also increase wildfire risk, as evidenced in 2017 in Portugal, where non-native eucalyptus provided highly flammable fuel.

Besides causing long-lasting and irreversible ecosystem damage, extreme wildfires can lead to hefty economic losses and harm human health. Globally, wildfire-induced air pollution is associated with

340,000 premature deaths annually, the OECD report said. The 2019/20 wildfires in Australia caused US\$23 billion in direct costs, while the 2018 Camp Fire in California cost about US\$19 billion, it added.

What can countries do to combat wildfire risks?


In the past two decades, at-risk countries have increased resources to suppress wildfires up to four-fold, but they have had limited success in containing damage.

Healthy ecosystems are more resilient and less prone to wildfire ignition and spread, so protecting and restoring degraded forests and peatlands has become a key element in many countries' wildfire prevention efforts, the OECD said.

Limiting illegal and unsustainable land use, and the scaling up of monitoring and enforcement efforts, is also vital.

Better land-use planning and building rules and standards are key to protecting lives and assets, and play a key role in containing wildfire risk and impacts, the report said.

Up-to-date information on wildfire hazard, exposure and vulnerability can help to better assess future wildfire risk while also inform prevention and preparedness decisions.

Coordination, collaboration and the exchange of knowledge across sectors and levels of government also need to be strengthened, the OECD added. But there is no solution for bringing fire frequency back down to historical levels without drastically cutting greenhouse gas emissions, GFW researchers said. 

Up-to-date information on wildfire hazard, exposure and vulnerability can help to better assess future wildfire risk while also inform prevention and preparedness decisions.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/how-can-we-prevent-wildfire-disasters/>)

The creeping rise in regional temperatures on land - which accounts for only 30 per cent of the planet's surface - is super-charging increasingly extreme weather for its 8 billion people. Image: Kyle Hasegawa, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.



Global boiling: Billions already suffer in heat over 1.5°C limit

Many people live with temperatures above the Paris Agreement's ceiling for global warming as land heats faster than the oceans.

Turn on the news during scorching summer heatwaves and wildfires and you'll likely hear warnings that average global temperatures are rising towards a key limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times, intended to avoid the worst of climate change.

What you probably won't hear is that billions of people worldwide are already experiencing local warming of higher than 1.5°C (2.7 Fahrenheit) - the most ambitious global goal set in the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

Several scientists told Context that people living in Europe, the Arctic, much of Africa, North America, the

Middle East, Asia and parts of South America have in recent years been exposed to regional temperatures that breached the 1.5°C ceiling.

They are being hit hard by the ever-more damaging heatwaves, droughts, floods, storms and wildfires fuelled by temperatures above the 1.5°C Paris Agreement threshold, the scientists said.

"Many people are living in areas that have already warmed more than 1.5°C, and ... the main reason for this is that the land warms faster than the oceans," said Robert Rohde, chief scientist at Berkeley Earth, a US non-profit research group.

With temperatures varying naturally from day to day, it is hard for anyone to notice a long-term local change of 1.5°C. But the creeping rise in regional temperatures on land - which accounts for only 30 per cent of the planet's surface - is super-charging increasingly extreme weather for its 8 billion people.

Worldwide, July was the hottest month on record at exactly the Paris limit of 1.5°C. UN Secretary-General António Guterres said

this heralded a new era of “global boiling”. And ever more people are facing global warming of 1.5°C or above year-round.

Francesco Tubiello, a senior statistician at the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), said nations with a combined population of almost 3 billion people were exposed to more than 1.5°C of warming in 2022, based on his personal calculations. “This is a conservative figure,” Tubiello added. He compared 2022 with cooler temperatures from 1951-80, the baseline in an FAO and NASA database, when global warming had already added about 0.3C since pre-industrial times.

In a 2018 report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimated that 20-40 per cent of the world's population had experienced more than 1.5°C of warming “in at least one season”.

Oceans lag rates of warming on land

The quirk of slower ocean warming is often ignored. UN reports, for instance, tend to refer to continents such as Europe and Africa “warming faster than the global average” without mentioning that almost all land is warming quicker than the worldwide average including seas.

Overall, the IPCC estimates that global average surface temperatures were 1.15C warmer in 2013-22 than a pre-industrial baseline of 1850-1900, with land 1.65C hotter and the ocean 0.93C warmer. But there are big differences even on land. Countries such as India - the world's most populous - and much of the southern hemisphere are warming less quickly than the land average.

Zeke Hausfather, research lead at digital payments processor Stripe who also works at Berkeley Earth and is a senior fellow at the Breakthrough Institute, said cool sea breezes may help offset the pace of warming near coasts. “People tend to disproportionately live near

coastal areas, which tend to have lower rates of warming due to their proximity to oceans,” he said, evening out the average person's long-term experience of warming.

The IPCC estimates that 900 million people live in low-lying coastal zones, including in cities such as Tokyo, Mumbai, New York, Shanghai, Lagos and Buenos Aires.

Paris irony: first breach of 1.5°C in 2015

No one knew at the time - but as world leaders celebrated the Paris Agreement in December 2015, global average surface temperatures rose briefly above the 1.5°C warming goal they had just set, according to the Copernicus Climate Change Service.

Since that first blip above 1.5°C for a few days, which was stoked by an El Nino weather event that warms the Pacific Ocean, breaches have become frequent and longer, it has found.

Under the agreement, almost 200 nations set the target to limit global warming to “well below” 2°C above pre-industrial times while “pursuing efforts” to keep it below 1.5°C.

The Paris text does not spell out whether a breach is to be judged in days, weeks, months, years or decades. The IPCC interprets the 1.5°C threshold as denoting a global average over a 20-year period.

The UN's World Meteorological Organization says there is a 66 per cent probability that global average temperatures will be more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial times in at least one full year between 2023 and 2027. An El Nino event in the Pacific is again boosting temperatures this year.

“We've already breached 1.5 temporarily,” said Samantha Burgess, deputy director of Copernicus, which tracks global temperatures. “Ironically, we were over 1.5 when the Paris Agreement was adopted”.

“With all probability we will overshoot 1.5” in the early 2030s, she


said of long-term trends. The Paris goals are a cornerstone of efforts to spur a shift from fossil fuels - the main source of man-made greenhouse gases - towards renewable energies such as wind and solar power.

Gavin Schmidt, director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, said that local breaches of 1.5°C do not mean the central goal of the Paris climate deal has been lost.

“I would stress that there is nothing special about 1.5°C locally (or 2°C etc) - the Paris agreements reference the long-term global means (which encompass a large amount of spatial variation),” he wrote in an email.

And even if temperatures globally breach 1.5°C or 2°C, governments can try to bring them down again by 2100 - the long-term horizon for the Paris Agreement - for instance by planting trees that soak up carbon dioxide or by developing industrial-scale technologies to extract carbon from thin air.

Nonetheless, governments will have to make unprecedented cuts in greenhouse gas emissions to keep the 1.5°C goal alive, the IPCC says. Nations will meet in Dubai from late November for this year's COP28 UN climate summit in a bid to do that.

The big challenge they face is that global emissions have continued to rise to new highs, while most countries' commitments for cuts to stay below 1.5°C “are words on paper ... rather than changes in policy”, Copernicus' Burgess said. 

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/global-boiling-billions-already-suffer-in-heat-over-15c-limit/>)



Many parts of Africa, such as Samburu County in Kenya, pictured here, are facing increasingly severe drought conditions.

Image: Flickr/ Africa Progress Panel.

COVID-19'S LESSONS FOR CLIMATE ACTION

African leaders were underrepresented in the vaccine sharing programme during the pandemic, to the region's detriment. Today, few African climate experts are taking part in global policy work, writes **Ifeanyi Nsofor**

It is official: July was the hottest month on record. Global warming is happening, and its costs continue to mount. The World Meteorological Organization recently noted that, "Extreme weather, climate and water-related events caused 11,778 reported disasters between 1970 and 2021, with just over 2 million deaths and US\$4.3 trillion in economic losses."

Like a pandemic, climate change affects everyone, everywhere. In Canada, the Northwest Territories' capital, Yellowknife, was recently

evacuated, as hundreds of wildfires scorched the region, while the United States faces a resurgence of mosquito-borne infectious diseases such as malaria, West Nile virus, and dengue fever. In parts of Asia, severe monsoon rains have caused floods and destroyed livelihoods. In Malawi, two destructive storms compounded a protracted cholera outbreak that claimed more than 1,600 lives. The list goes on.

But the effects are not distributed evenly: nine in ten deaths and 60 per cent of economic losses from

climate shocks and extreme weather are in developing countries. I have seen first-hand the devastating impact of landslides in Nanka, my hometown in southeastern Nigeria. Over the years, the increase in gully erosion has wiped out homesteads, destroyed farmlands, and contributed to rising food insecurity.

The disastrous consequences of climate change are reminiscent of the Covid-19 pandemic, which killed more than six million people, destroyed businesses and livelihoods, and ravaged the world

economy. In fact, the global response to Covid-19 – now an ongoing health issue, rather than an emergency – holds important lessons for mitigating global warming.

For starters, climate change constitutes what the World Health Organization calls a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) and should be treated as such. Global warming certainly meets the WHO's typical definition of a PHEIC: "an extraordinary event which is determined to constitute a public health risk to other states through the international spread of disease and to potentially require a coordinated international response." But the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), rather than the WHO, is better positioned to lead the charge, since it already provides governments with scientific information to develop climate policies.

Second, the Global South must assume a larger climate leadership role. The underrepresentation of African health leaders in the construction of the Covid-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) facility, for example, dealt a major setback to the global pandemic response. Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, together with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations and the WHO, had created COVAX to ensure equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines, but the initiative – which was conceived with a colonial mindset – fell far short of this ideal.

The IPCC has made the same mistake: only a small percentage of the authors of its reports are from Africa. As I have argued elsewhere, leaders from Africa, which bears a disproportionate burden of the effects of climate change and contributed the least to the global emissions that are driving it, must be at the center of decision-making processes.

Third, governments must take steps to counter misinformation and disinformation. Falsehoods ran rampant during the pandemic,

resulting in an infodemic – a surplus of both legitimate and misleading information. With nearly five billion users worldwide, social-media platforms accelerated the spread of fake Covid-19 claims. But policymakers and academics could also use them to set the facts straight.

To educate the public about climate change, its consequences, and how to build a greener world, more scientists and other experts should post on social-media platforms and engage with other users. Worryingly, of the users who tweeted regularly about global warming and biodiversity, nearly half had become inactive six months after Elon Musk took over Twitter, now called X, and created more space for false information to flourish.

Fourth, all countries should pay their fair share for global response efforts. During the pandemic, wealthy countries were encouraged to provide financing to help low- and middle-income countries access Covid-19 vaccinations, tests, and medicines, with mixed results.

Similarly, wealthy countries bear a moral responsibility to provide climate aid to poorer countries, owing to their historical emissions. Last year, the United Nations Climate

Change Conference (COP27) took an important step in this direction with the creation of a loss and damage fund for developing countries facing the effects of global warming. But as commendable as this measure was, vulnerable countries must also improve governance and combat corruption to mitigate climate change. For example, \$9 billion worth of gold is smuggled out of Nigeria annually. The government could have invested that lost revenue in environmental projects, like preventing landslides in Nanka.

Lastly, hoarding is futile when tackling crises that are truly global in scope. During the Covid-19 pandemic, many countries in the Global North exacerbated inequity by stockpiling personal protective equipment, tests, vaccines, and therapeutics, and by clinging to intellectual-property protections. Yet infectious diseases do not respect borders; nor does climate change. Every country in the world is experiencing its devastating consequences, albeit in different forms.

Addressing climate change requires viewing and understanding the global community as one entity. My tribe in Nigeria, the Igbo, has a phrase that underscores the importance of acting collectively: *Igwèbùiké*. It means "we are stronger together when we are united". The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated the necessity of an equitable model of global governance if we are to have any hope of bequeathing a healthy planet to future generations. 🌱

Ifeanyi M. Nsofor, a Senior New Voices Fellow at the Aspen Institute, is a Senior Atlantic Fellow for Health Equity at George Washington University and an Innovation Fellow at PandemicTech.

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/covid-19s-lessons-for-climate-action/>)

The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated the necessity of an equitable model of global governance if we are to have any hope of bequeathing a healthy planet to future generations.



In Bangladesh, at least 691 people have died so far in 2023, and more than 138,000 have been infected, official figures show, making this the deadliest year since the first recorded epidemic in 2000. The previous record toll was 281 deaths last year. Image: World Bank Photo Collection, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

Mosquito-borne dengue grows deadlier in South Asia as planet warms

Virus is posing an ever-greater threat in Bangladesh and Nepal where rise and spread of cases are linked to climate change impacts.

Mosquito-borne dengue fever is taking a heavy toll on South Asian nations this year as Bangladesh grapples with record deaths and Nepal faces cases in new areas, with disease experts linking worsening outbreaks to the impacts of climate change.

Authorities in the two countries are scrambling to contain and treat the disease - which is also known as “breakbone fever” for the severe muscle and joint pains it induces. Entomologists and epidemiologists say rising temperatures and longer monsoon seasons are providing ideal breeding conditions for mosquitoes.

The threat is not restricted to South Asia as dengue rates are rising globally with 4.2 million cases reported in 2022 - up eight-fold from 2000 - the World Health Organization (WHO) says.

Earlier this year, WHO said dengue is the fastest-spreading tropical disease worldwide and represents a “pandemic threat”.

In Bangladesh, at least 691 people have died so far in 2023, and more than 138,000 have been infected, official figures show, making this the deadliest year since the first recorded epidemic in 2000. The previous record toll was 281 deaths last year.

A lack of proper prevention measures has allowed the dengue-carrying *Aedes aegypti* mosquito to spread across almost all of Bangladesh, said Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist and zoology professor at Jahangirnagar University in the capital Dhaka.

He said this raised the risk of more infections occurring during September. Dengue is common during the June-to-September monsoon season, when mosquitoes thrive in stagnant water.

“This climate is favourable for the breeding of *Aedes* mosquitoes,” Bashar said in an interview. “Dengue is not only a problem for

Dhaka, it is now a problem for the entire country.”

Nepal struggling with ‘strange’ growth of dengue cases

Meanwhile, Nepal - which first recorded dengue in 2004 - has had at least 13 dengue deaths and more than 21,200 cases so far this year across 75 of its 77 districts, according to officials.

This year could match the 2022 toll of 88 deaths and 54,000 cases, said Uttam Koirala, a senior public health officer at the national epidemiology and disease control division.

Meghnath Dhimal, a senior research officer at the Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC), said the incidence and spread of dengue had been rising quickly nationwide in recent years.

Rising temperatures mean cases have started occurring in colder autumn months, while Nepal’s higher mountain districts that never before had the disease are

now struggling to curb its spread, he said, describing the shifting patterns as “strange”.

For example, the city of Dharan in the mountainous east has been hit particularly hard this year - with dengue cases rising so fast that hospitals and ambulances are overwhelmed by demand, according to Umesh Mehta, the local health division chief.

The city of more than 160,000 people saw the number of dengue cases peak at 1,700 a day as of late August, he said.

Amrit Kumar Thakur, a Dharan resident, was one of four members of his family to contract dengue last month. The 27-year-old said the disease started with a mild body ache and got steadily worse before he was treated at a temporary health centre set up to deal with the fast-growing number of cases.

“Dengue was the worst health experience of my life,” said Thakur, adding that he and his relatives had fully recovered.

Climate change seen creating ideal breeding conditions

WHO says dengue is rising partly because global warming benefits mosquitoes, along with other factors including movement of people and goods, urbanisation and problems with sanitation.

In July, WHO said an unusual episodic amount of rainfall in Bangladesh, together with high temperatures and high humidity, had helped the mosquito population to grow across the nation.

Furthermore, Bangladesh has experienced longer-than-usual monsoon seasons in recent years, with erratic rainfall over the March-to-October period and more breeding grounds popping up for mosquitoes, according to various disease and health experts.

The number of potential breeding sites identified in 2023 is the highest in the last five years,



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-ATIQUUL ISLAM

Mayor, Dhaka North City Corporation

said Nazmul Islam, director of the disease control branch of Bangladesh's health department.

Fiercer floods fuelled by heavy rains and melting glaciers - driven by climate change - are another major factor behind the spread of dengue, said Mohammad Mushtuq Husain, an advisor at the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research.

The Bangladeshi government has also cited climate change as a driver behind the country's worsening dengue outbreak.

mosquito breeding, engaging with the public, and managing symptoms.

In Dhaka, officials are going around the city spraying insecticide to kill mosquitoes and imposing fines on people if breeding sites for the larvae are found.

Atiqul Islam, mayor of the Dhaka North City Corporation, said the authorities would have to keep informing residents of the risks, and monitoring the situation, throughout the year.

"It's not the time for pinning blame, rather everyone should come

testing kits, and boosting the availability of platelets used in blood transfusions to treat some patients.

Yet when it comes to treatment broadly, ordinary families face high costs. Researchers from Dhaka University's Institute of Health Economics have warned that total medical expenses for dengue patients may exceed 10 billion taka (US\$91 million) this year, up from 4.5 billion taka (US\$41 million) in 2019.

Dhaka resident Akhtar Hossain spent 60,000 taka (US\$545) on private hospital care for his daughter,

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Saber Hossain Chowdhury, the prime minister's special envoy on climate change, said last month on the messaging platform X, formerly known as Twitter, that the nation's record dengue cases are "a clear instance of (the) climate change health nexus".

Bangladesh needs to think about a national plan for adapting its health system to prevent diseases like dengue from turning into major disasters, Chowdhury said in an interview.

Efforts underway to control mosquitoes and inform the public

As dengue lacks a specific cure, health experts say the disease must be kept at bay through control of

forward to deal with the dengue situation - for their love of this city where we are born, live and die," said Islam.

In Nepal, Dhimal from the NHRC said no authority alone could stop dengue as mosquitoes are found everywhere from garages to the corners of houses which are out of reach of the government.

"Everyone should be aware and proactive, and contribute from their side to control the spread of the vector," he added.

Civil society and development organisations are also helping to tackle the disease.

Sanjeev Kafley, head of the Bangladesh delegation for the International Red Cross, said it was helping to raise public awareness, procuring

Ayesha Tabassum Taqwa, who ultimately died of dengue last month at the age of 10.

Hossain cried as he spoke of Taqwa's love of learning.

"Her books, notebooks ... are all still on the reading table. (She) will never arrange new books," he said. "(But) who can we blame and what is the point of talking about it?"

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