



# 8. USING INTERGENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION ACROSS ASIAN DELTAS

The Living Deltas Hub is implementing an innovative approach to demonstrate the importance of intergenerational perspectives in unlocking inclusive and powerful solutions to climate change challenges. Understanding the memories of older people and fears and hopes of younger people enhances policies and practices for sustainable delta futures.



Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office



Climate change & biodiversity



Science, research, technology



Open societies & conflict resolution

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

5 GENDER EQUALITY



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



13 CLIMATE ACTION



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



## Achievements

The Hub is using a unique opportunity for South-South learning by using new intergenerational research approaches to mobilise diverse knowledges, capacities and agencies in delta populations in the Red River, Mekong and Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna Deltas. The Hub has identified a novel way of transforming community capacities in the deltas to adapt, absorb and anticipate future climate challenges and build more sustainable delta futures. This enables us to work with stakeholders and affected communities who are seeking to understand and respond to changing delta climates.

Our intergenerational approach to researching climate change and biodiversity over is novel in that it can be replicated and scaled across delta countries and regions. The participatory community researcher approach enables us to identify and respond to local needs and demonstrate how intergenerational dialogue around climate change and biodiversity can: 1) build on and expand social and cultural capital; (2) support resilience within rural communities; (3) contribute to transformative and adaptive capacities; and (4) amplify community voice in policy making for resilience. This is achieved due to the Hub's transdisciplinary approach that enables us to work across the disciplinary boundaries that characterise existing research on climate, youth and older people.

Hub research reveals how the relationship between an ageing population and adaption to environmental degradation and climate change has been given little consideration in existing research and policy<sup>1</sup>. Older people are consistently portrayed as vulnerable, while young people are recognised as important environmental and development actors, a feature enshrined in Vietnamese law<sup>2</sup>. Young people, however, frequently have little voice at community

<sup>1</sup> For example, the 2019 report by UNFPA Vietnam and the Vietnam National Committee on Ageing Towards a comprehensive national policy for and ageing Vietnam recommending a medium term (2021-2035) does not recognise the relationship between older people and the natural environment: the words, 'climate', 'climate change', 'farming', 'farm' do not appear at all in the report

<sup>2</sup> Article 12 of the 2005 Youth Law states that young people have the responsibility: "To participate in environmental protection and rational use of natural resources; to combat acts of destroying natural resources and environment" (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2012, p. 8).

and national level. Significant rural-urban migration of younger people in deltas is impacting delta lives and futures with losses in productive and reproductive labour. With parents often working in cities, older people are significant transmitters of knowledge to younger generations.

Research that treats younger and older people in isolation ignores the critical importance of intergenerational dialogues between memories and experiences of historical changes and understanding of the challenges young people are confronting. By understanding intergenerational knowledge transmission and how this is influenced by ageing across the lifecourses of people at risk from climate change, we can identify how vulnerable communities can be mobilised to respond to rapid change and contribute to policy making for delta resilience.

## Who benefits?

**Delta community members** benefit through improved confidence, skills and resources (e.g. briefings, visual materials) to engage with decision-makers and play a greater role in shaping inclusive and sustainable futures. Within each participating community we train and support two community researchers who shape research questions, lead data collection and participate in analysis, gaining new skills and employment. The research process generates intergenerational dialogue as younger and older groups share their knowledge and ideas with one another, and together determine appropriate ways to document and share this co-produced knowledge.

**Local authorities, regional and national decision-makers** will benefit from exposure to detailed and localised evidence on the needs and capacities of rural communities across generations in responding to climate change. Evidence will be disaggregated and presented in accessible formats to support policy and programming that responds to the distinct experiences of different groups (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity). Human-centred design activities will generate solution-focused dialogue bringing together community, university, civil society and government representatives. Confident communities who feel their voice is being listened to, a new evidence base, and carefully designed dialogue events will provide a foundation for more inclusive and effective development solutions.

**Global, national and local civil society** will benefit from detailed evidence of the value of intergenerational relationships and knowledge in the context of climate change. Our replicable research model provides a low-cost resource for grassroots, civil society and other organisations to adapt across climate affected groups within and beyond the delta regions. Dialogue with Help Age International has identified an opportunity to scale our work through their 3,000 Intergenerational Self-Help Clubs in Vietnam, and we are working with youth NGOs to develop a Hackathon engaging young people to bring generations together to develop strategies to tackle climate change using smart phone technology. We will work with our international networks to share findings demonstrating the value of an intergenerational approach to researching and responding to climate change.

**Secondary schools and young people in the deltas** benefit from curricula resources and activities raising awareness of climate change and intergenerational understanding. Community researchers will be supported to share research results with secondary schools in their area to develop 'living library' events with older women and men sharing their experiences of environmental change and engaging in dialogue about their shared futures.

**Delta region universities and schools** benefit through curricula materials and toolkits sharing findings and approaches that can be used and adapted. The participation of student researchers and non-Hub academic staff in partner universities in research design, data collection and management, analysis and engagement with decision-makers builds and extends intergenerational research knowledges and capacities in the deltas. In turn this will enable inclusive, solutions-focused research on climate change within and beyond this project.

## Gender and inclusivity

An intersectional understanding of experience and position/power, and a commitment to gender equality and inclusion define/run-through all aspects of the research:

- A critical analysis of literature and policy in relation to whose voices count.
- Research with one ethnic minority community (Cham) and one Kinh majority community
- Group-based research activities according to age and gender to encourage greater participation and

opportunity to demonstrate agency without fear of being judged or silenced by others.

- Research explores different experiences, perspectives, and knowledge according to age, gender, ethnicity, and income/poverty.
- Research findings will support policy and programming that understands and responds to the distinct experiences of different groups according to age, gender, ethnicity.
- Research communication will centre the voices of those currently least visible or heard in research and policy on changing delta climates.

## Summary of development impact of this work

Institutional & policy gap	Living Deltas contribution	Pathways to impact
<p>Understanding the memories of older people and fears and hopes of younger people enhances policies and practices for sustainable delta futures. However, the relationship between these knowledges is currently absent in policy and research.</p>	<p>Evidencing the critical importance of intergenerational perspectives to adapt, absorb and anticipate future climate challenges and build more sustainable delta futures.</p>	<p>A series of communication and engagement activities and capacity development to generate dialogue, share new knowledges and amplify community voices.</p>
<p>Older people are portrayed as vulnerable and an at-risk social burden. Young people regarded as environmental and development actors but have little voice at community and national levels in relation to development planning and policy.</p>	<p>Intergenerational dialogue around climate change and biodiversity can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build on and expand social and cultural capital</li> <li>2. Support resilience within rural communities</li> <li>3. Contribute to transformative and adaptive capacities</li> <li>4. Amplify community voice in policymaking for resilience</li> </ol>	<p>At local level: community exhibition; local language booklet; living libraries at secondary schools; training of community researchers.</p> <p>At delta-level: Workshops bringing together community representatives, university partner, and regional decisionmakers; use of Human-Centred Design activities to co-design solutions for the future; policy briefs and resources; sharing adaptable research approach for intergenerational dialogue and knowledge.</p> <p>At national level: dialogue with key stakeholders; sharing of findings via workshops, briefs and resources; sharing adaptable research approach for intergenerational dialogue and knowledge</p> <p>At international level: series of policy briefs; workshops; sharing adaptable research approach for intergenerational dialogue and knowledge.</p>

## People involved in this work

Name	Gender	Discipline	Work Package	Institution	Country
Matt Baillie-Smith	M	Human geography	Delta Voices	Northumbria University	UK
Laura Beckwith	F	Human geography	Delta SDGs	Northumbria University	UK
Oliver Hensengerth	M	Political science	Delta Voices	Northumbria University	UK
Hue Nguyen	F	English education	Delta Voices	An Giang University	VN
Lan Nguyen	F	Education	Delta-level Interventions	An Giang University	VN
Tanh Nguyen	M	Ecological systems engineering	Delta Voices Delta-level Interventions	An Giang University	VN
Md. Feisal Rahman	M	Human geograpghy	Delta Impact	Durham University	UK
Graham Smith	M	Oral history	Delta Voices	Newcastle University	UK
Mai Thuy	F	Education	Delta Voices	An Giang University	VN
Anh Vu	F	Political sciece	Delta SDGs	Newcastle Univeristy	UK
Siobhan Warrington	F	Oral history	Delta Voices	Newcastle University	UK