

CLIMATE ON OUR MINDS

Climate Literacy for Climate Action

By Merlin Francis.

Climate Change may feel like an insurmountable problem and our future may look bleak. But all is not lost. On World Environment Day 2022, CSTEP launched a new campaign — Climate On Our Minds. Because there's Only One Earth.

Through this campaign, we hope to enable climate action triggered by informed conversations on what this crisis means.



We are already feeling the effects of Climate Change. We need to learn to adapt and bounce back. Art by Shayantani Chatterjee

Climate Resilience

Why are we talking about Resilience?

For decades many actively denied or paid scant attention while scientists warned us about rising global temperatures due to human activities. Well, this is happening now. The effects of climate change are here for us to see. Now, we need to learn to adapt and bounce back.

This is where [Climate Resilience](#) comes in.



Understanding Climate Resilience

We have often heard of resilience in the context of psychology. A resilient person is someone who can take what life throws at them, find acceptance, and adapt to the changing context. Resilience refers to the ability to bounce back or recover quickly from hardships to return to stability.

[Climate resilience](#) is similar in meaning. Building resilience is essentially finding ways to protect ourselves from the impact of climate change and minimising the risks. Although climate change will affect everyone on the planet, how it will affect different regions or communities will vary. This is why it is important to develop climate resilience by looking at the local context.

The first step to becoming climate-resilient is to identify the [risks](#) from climate change. The complexity of assessing risks from climate change is that it is hard to predict exactly when something will happen. Even worse, changes in one area (for eg. rainfall patterns) can significantly affect others (cropping patterns). Changes in multiple areas can in turn have consequences on health and society (starvation, food security crisis, social unrest, riots, violence, etc.). While the best models by scientists can help us guess how things may change, we do not know for sure exactly how and when they will change.

Drawing up climate resilience plans is a lot like trying to protect your home from a thief; there's a power cut, it is raining heavily, and you're not sure if it is one thief, a few small-time thieves, an armed robbery, or something at the scale of *Money Heist* or *Ocean's 11*. How can you begin preparing without knowing what is going to hit you?

Resilience plans are rooted in local contexts.

In the above example of a house robbery, it is to your advantage that it is your home and so you know it in and out even if it is pitch black. It is for similar reasons that research vouches for a [community-based approach](#) to building climate resilience.



Community-based resilience action plans are rooted in local wisdom

At the heart of it, a good resilience plan incorporates the wisdom and knowledge of different groups of people and their experiences, improves opportunities for sustainable livelihoods, and a dynamic and connected governance structure that fosters self-organisation.

By making sure that the resilience plan is rooted in local contexts and driven by all the actors in a community (from the different levels of government and civic action to families and individuals), we can ensure that the most vulnerable are protected and resilient measures are effective and quick-acting.

Here are some [examples](#) of how cities are building climate resilience:

1. Netherlands' [Room for River](#) initiative. At least 30% of the Netherlands lies under sea level and climate change is likely to increase flooding. In at least 30 places across the country, the initiative created more room for rivers by removing silt, diversions for excess flood water, and restoring its marshes.
2. In [St Paul](#), Minesota, residents decided to restore the wetland on which a shopping mall was constructed (and later went bankrupt).
3. Japan is located along the Pacific Ring of Fire where multiple tectonic plates collide. The small island country sees about 1500 earthquakes a year. But the country and its people are prepared. [Read](#) about how Japan built resilience and how it recovers from natural disasters.



Enjoyed reading this article? We initiated this campaign to encourage conversations on Climate Change. Send us your questions on Climate Change or share your thoughts on how communities can build climate resilience, by writing to us on Twitter ([@CSTEP India](https://twitter.com/CSTEP_India)).