



DELTA IN TIMES OF CLIMATE CHANGE II

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE, SCIENCE, CITIES AND BUSINESS
ROTTERDAM THE NETHERLANDS, 24–26 SEPTEMBER 2014

Deltas in Depth scientific sessions	
Deltas in Depth Theme 9. Governance of adaptation	
DD 9.6 Engaging the public in adaptation governance	
Chair	Prof.dr. Peter Driessen, Knowledge for Climate / Utrecht University, the Netherlands
Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● PhD Dries Hegger, Utrecht University, the Netherlands● Dr. Andrea Keessen, Utrecht University, the Netherlands● PhD Omer Chouinard, Université de Moncton, Canada● PhD Phuong Thi Hong Le, Wageningen UR, the Netherlands

This session gave an overview of various projects that either studied the role of the public in adaptation governance, or explicitly aimed to include the public.

Dries Hegger presented the results of literature study with the aim to explore the hidden potential of what residents can do to adapt their houses and surroundings to climate change. Residents are important as they are key actors for the success or failure (e.g. via protests) of adaptation projects. So far, there is no explicit overview of all their potential roles. Via a literature review Hegger et al. identified three forms of commitment of residents: citizen vis-à-vis governments; consumer on the market; and member of civil society. For each of these forms the default option and the unexploited potential were studied. The biggest opportunities seem to lie in the second and third form of commitment. For citizens as consumers the default option focusses on financial incentives for consumers. The unexploited potential lies in looking for win-win situations between adaptation options and consumers' lifestyle choices (e.g. social distinction; mainstreaming of adaptation in 'normal' consumer practices). The default option for the form of member of civil society focusses on the (limited) role of NGOs, but there is potential for more explicit and pro-active focus on climate change adaptation by groups of residents, for instance eco-villages initiated by residents and community level flood preparedness (e.g. Flutschutzgemeinschaften in Hamburg). The discussion pointed out that more research is needed, for instance to make the impact of citizen action versus public action explicit and study actual best/worst practices. What is necessary to exploit the potential is likely to differ locally due to cultural differences. Also willingness to be active in long-term horizon adaptation solutions (which might have limited direct benefits) needs to be studied, as there was little to be found on it in literature.

The second presentation, by Andrea Keessen, addressed the issue of solidarity. Solidarity is a normative principle that underlines many climate adaptation projects. This is especially the case in the Netherlands, where adaptation often equals water management. Water management in the Netherlands depends on collective and public arrangements and is explicitly linked to solidarity. This solidarity can also be seen in the current Delta Program. In flood management it is institutionalised. In fresh water supply the solidarity between regions is less strong, which leads to local solidarity (e.g. Tholen, where land owners/right holders and water board cooperate to improve fresh water supply, paid for by special tax on 'users'). But in flood management solidarity also seems to shift: as from this year water authorities need to pay 10% of the costs of primary embankments (which used to be funded completely by the state, now the division is state 50%, 40% shared by water authorities, 10% regional water authority). In regional flood management in Groningen solidarity is also affected by recent changes of focussing more on the consequences of a flood. This leads to differences in protection level. Yet inhabitants and companies from each area need to pay the same tax, but get





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different levels of protection (which depends on economic value). These kind of developments show that solidarity cannot be taken for granted. This might lead to changing roles and responsibilities. Discussion on solidarity is currently mainly among experts, perhaps due to a lack of awareness by the public. The recommendation is to be more explicit on values, costs and benefits and prepare for a more open discussion on solidarity.

Omar Chouinard presented on a project that takes a trans-disciplinary, eco-bio-social approach to coastal zone adaptation, called ARTISTICCC. The project focusses on local communities, as they are the ones that need to take local action. A trans-disciplinary approach is taken that combines natural and social sciences and humanities. The project conducts a scientific enquiry into the conditions under which genuine evidence - based community - centred policy-making may occur. It focusses on aspects like capacity building, partnership and trust and collaboration. It builds upon a long standing relationship with community leaders. Omar sketched the problems of the Pays de Cocagne in Canada, a poor region with no rural planning. The project helps with conducting research. By linking to the local culture and arts the research results will be translated in policy briefs that are aware of the local circumstances. In the discussion it was emphasised that it is important to have a good network, share research tools and build trust are important aspects of good collaboration between scientists and the public.

Le Thi Hong Phuong presented on the use of indigenous knowledge (IK) in developing climate change adaptation strategies. Use of IK is useful to embed adaptation strategies in the local culture. A literature review showed that IK is currently often wider interpreted than historically. IK is especially often used in areas with low capacity of society and low economical system. IK is used in CCA to support the policy making process, by providing information on the past and present practices, climate, etc. It can be used to increase community engagement and as guiding principle for sustainable development. An important limitation is that IK is not always 'right' or sustainable, for instance when farmers do not use animal manure as they find it dirty and bad for the soil. On other occasions it can be helpful to adapt, for instance when farmers keep fish in flooded rise areas, which provides them with extra income and the manure of the fish increases soil fertility. Even though IK has its limitations, it is valuable to use it in policy making and research projects. Future research should study on ways to combine scientific (model) knowledge with IK. An important question that was raised is if climate change will not cause so big changes that IK might not be useful anymore in the future. This might be true in some respect, but still IK can help to put adaptation in the right cultural context, and local farmers might develop their own adaptation strategies too.

