

SPARC



SOCIAL POLICY ANALYSIS
AND RESEARCH CENTRE

SOCIAL POLICY ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH CENTER, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

Webinar Series; Lecture 4

Reflections on the post-disaster reconstruction Mantra “Building Back Better”

**29TH JULY 2021
3P.M.-4 P.M.**

**ZOOM LOGIN DETAILS
[CLICK HERE](#)**

OR ENTER

**MEETING ID: 844 8330 9497
PASSCODE: 575355**

Abstract

We all know the slogan ‘building back better’ Bill Clinton established in 2006 as the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General’s special envoy for Tsunami Recovery. In a special report the UN offered “10 Key propositions for building back better” aiming to improve the resilience of disaster affected nations, communities, and individuals. Since then, ‘Building Back Better’ has become the Mantra of various post-disaster experts and post-disaster reconstruction programmes all over the world.

But does repeating the Mantra really leads to long-term, sustainable, and more resilient post- disaster reconstruction? Have disaster affected communities, local authorities, and individuals since 2006 gain from the knowledge and expertise of post-disaster experts that work according to this Mantra and the 10 key propositions for Building Back Better?

I would like to follow up on these questions referring to my experiences in post-tsunami reconstruction as the co-project manager of a re-location and housing reconstruction project in Galle, Sri Lanka, and as a PhD. student assessing the long-term impacts of relocation in the same village. I would also like to bring in my knowledge of post-earthquake reconstruction in Nepal into this reflection to compare and find commonalities/differences of large-scale reconstruction initiatives. The aim is to find answers to the question whether utilizing the Mantra of ‘Building Back Better’ create resilience and positive outcomes in the lives of relocated communities and the local governments.

The speaker:

Dr Pia Ruth Hollenbach is senior researcher with the University of Lausanne and a freelance researcher and consultant based in Zurich/Switzerland and Vorarlberg/Austria. A development geographer by training (South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg), with hands-on experience on promoting local partnerships for sustainable development, her career has been guided by a motivation to co-create knowledge and learning processes in order to find contextualized and relevant solutions for complex development problems. She believes in action-oriented, interdisciplinary research and the bridging of theory and practice. Dr Hollenbach aims to support policy and programme work, evidence-based political dialogue and the quality improvement of international aid. Her recent research is a Swiss National Foundation (SNSF) funded research for development (r4d) project on Urban Solid Waste Management in South Asia aiming to understand cultural appropriate and locally based waste management systems and evaluate their relevance, effectiveness and potentials to support and formulate inclusive Waste governance systems. Furthermore, the research targets to inform policies towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals globally, particular Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities); Goal 13 (Climate Action) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for Change).

