

November/December 2022

International Winter School - From Extracting to Intersecting

Short Project Report

From November 28 to December 9 the international winter school *From Extracting to Intersecting* was held on the campus of OP Jindal Global University in Sonipat, India. The winter school was organized by the Centre for Sustainability (CFS) of the Jindal School of Government & Public Policy in cooperation with the Global Solutions Initiative and supported by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. The winter school was designed as an adjunct project to the ongoing Circular Economy Solutions Dialogues and as a preparatory event of the A G20 and U20 side event *on Circular Resources for our Common Future: Cities as Drivers*, scheduled to take place from February 28 thru March 2nd, 2023, in New Delhi, India

Overview and Theme

Since the industrial revolution, extraction of resources from nature has fueled industrial and economic growth. The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted how much we now depend on digital technologies. As the world is more digitalized, global consumption of resources and waste production continue to grow exponentially. As global supply and value chains are facing growing disruptions, it is time to bend the linear economy within planetary boundaries.

During the winter school selected participants from around the world worked on this challenge in small teams and cooperated to develop actionable proposals, establishing linkages across the following five themes: social-ecological systems, circular economy, creative economy, development cooperation, and threats to multilateralism.

As part of the winter school the participants visited projects in Delhi such as a newly designed co-working space for e-waste dismantlers and a GIZ India project on solar and battery storage in microgrids. The winter school aimed at bringing together young development practitioners and entrepreneurs with students and junior researchers to explore cross cutting approaches and youth-led initiatives at the intersection between research and practice.

The Participants and Contributors

Over the course of ten days about thirty-five participants and more than twenty lecturers and experts took part in the winter school activities on the campus of OP Jindal University in Sonipat India. Most participants were students enrolled in programs at OP Jindal Global University with various educational backgrounds from public policy, law, business administration, architecture and more. With the help of GIZ the organizers were able to include international participants from outside India into the activities. These participants were handpicked young practitioners who are part of the Young Global Changers program of the Global Solutions Initiative.

The Young Global Changers are young people between the ages of twenty and thirty-five who are selected for their contributions to changemaking in the domains of economy, ecology, politics, and civil society. Six of them were part of the winter school to foster an exchange between policy research and on-the-ground impact. The six international participants came from different backgrounds covering (1) development collaboration, (2) technology, (3) urban development, (4) media & journalism, (5) civil society and (6) politics & administration.

- **Jenifer Colpas (Colombia):** Jenifer is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of Tierra Grata, a social enterprise that develops low-cost, easy-to-install solutions providing

access to clean energy, safe water, and sanitation services to rural communities in Colombia.

- **Gopal Mohoto (Bangladesh):** Gopal is an engineer, entrepreneur, and researcher on renewable energy. He is Co-founder and Team Leader of CASSETEX. They provide a solar powered battery swapping service for electric three-wheelers in Bangladesh.
- **Ximena Giraldo (Peru):** Ximena is an expert in sustainable cities and communities. She was formerly the City Services and Environmental Management Manager in the Metropolitan Municipality of Lima. She also initiated the barrio eco project to make neighborhoods in Lima more sustainable. She currently works for the Dutch Embassy in Peru.
- **Blessed Chidhoni (Zimbabwe):** Blessed is an ambassador at Future Africa and also works at the Zimbabwe Democracy Institute, aiming to provide research, and policy analysis to advance democracy, development, good governance, and human rights. He is involved in research and activities promoting democratization and climate awareness.
- **Jill Beytin (USA/Germany):** Jill is the founder and executive producer at Bear Radio, a podcast agency that specializes in artistic sound production, leading education, active collaboration, and dedicated community building.
- **Daniel Ouwadia (Nigeria):** Daniel is currently working for the Ambassador of the Economic, Social and Cultural Council at the African Union focusing on youth engagement. He is a former member of Nigeria's youth parliament.

The Young Global Changers were accompanied by Ole Spies, Program Lead of the Young Global Changers program at the Global Solutions Initiative (GSI). The original plans also included the onsite presence of Program Manager Ms. Yamunna Rao and GSI's General Manager Ms. Susanne Staufer. Due to visa complications in both cases, they were not able to attend in person. Ms. Staufer delivered an online input. GSI's president Professor Dennis Snower also contributed via video call and discussed with the participants the current challenges within global forums like the G20.

Other speakers included among others: **Dr. Tetsushi Sonobe:** Dean and CEO of the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), the Tokyo-based think tank of the Asian Development Bank; **Dr. Nicolas Buchoud:** Co-founder and President, Grand Paris Alliance for Metropolitan Development, Global Solutions Fellow, Think7 Consultant and advisor to ADBI; **Dr. Riattu Qibthiyyah:** Director of the Institute for economic and social research in University of Indonesia (LPEM FEB UI); **Sachin Chaturvedi:** Director General at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), a New Delhi-based autonomous Think-Tank. And several other experts from leading think tanks and research institutions.

Didactical Approach and Program Structure

The activities were planned collaboratively by the Global Solutions Initiative and the Centre for Sustainability (CFS) of the Jindal School of Government & Public Policy with support by Rakesh Kasturi, a professional workshop designer and trainer. Professor Milindo Chakrabarti of the Jindal School of Government and Public Policy coordinated the events on the side of OP Jindal University.

The program started with three online meetings during which the participants were introduced to the topics of the winter school and to the four case studies. The program included lectures, discussions, and workshop elements as well as several field trips. During the onsite phase, participants took part in a blend of different program elements. The first half of the program focused on expert input on overarching themes like social-ecological systems, circular economy, creative economy, development cooperation, and on current threats to

multilateralism. In the second half of the program participants worked in teams on specific cases and aimed to combine policy perspectives with a practical implementation lens.

One central aim of the program was to engage young professionals and researchers productively around questions of circular economy. It aimed to address questions of how best to tackle challenges of a circular economy on a policy level but also on the ground in cities and communities.

Topics and Case Studies

The participants were put into teams. Each team addressed one specific case study. The case studies were based on actual activities, initiatives, and projects.

- **Case 1: Management of Organic Waste in India. (GIZ)**

The project aims to improve sustainable organic waste management practices in the three cities of Kanpur, Kochi, and Port Blair, in Indian states, and at the national level. It focuses on integrated waste management. This includes centralized and decentralized systems of organic waste management like aerobic composting and biological methanation.

- **Case 2: E(co)Work**

A co-working space adapted for the informal e-waste dismantlers and business support services to catalyze the transition from informal to formal in Delhi, India. It aims to improve livelihoods and reduce business risk through improved legal status. It also provides access to health care and helps to reduce the environmental by contributing to the circular economy while also increasing revenue & profitability of micro-entrepreneurs.

- **Case 3: KUA Coffee**

Kua is an Australian social enterprise that produces and sells sustainable coffee. KUA purchases coffee directly from smallholder farmers and reinvests profits into programs that benefit the local coffee growers. All packaging is reusable or home compostable. KUA also partners with local organizations to fully recycle all used coffee grounds. It also engages in a 200% climate offset program.

- **Case 4: CASSETEX**

The fourth case study is CASSETEX. An initiative by one of the winter school participants, Gopal Mohoto from Bangladesh. CASSETEX is installing a system of solar powered battery swapping stations for electric three-wheelers in Bangladesh. It aims to make the last-mile transport more sustainable.

The participants used these cases as starting points to think about policy implications as well as implementation challenges to move to circular modes of productions. Each of the four groups produced policy recommendation based on their engagement with the topic at hand.

Field Trips

- **Field Trip 1:**

As part of the winter school the participants visited the E[co]work site, which is a co-working space for micro-entrepreneurs in the electronic waste sector. Participants were able to try out for themselves the recycling process and the process of dismantling of e-waste. They also learnt about the situation and the challenges for e-waste dismantlers working in the informal sector in Delhi.

- **Field Trip 2:**

The winter School participants also visited a GIZ India project on solar and battery storage in microgrids in Delhi. They get to see the premises and gained an insight into the procedures that accompany the process of battery charging, storage, and use.

- **Field Trip 3:**

Participants also visited the offices of the Indian Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW). A public policy think tank devoted to research on all matters affecting the use, reuse, and misuse of resources. At the CEEW learnt about and discussed an outreach program on climate resilience and engaged around the topic of policy advice in general.

Assessment, Outcome and Next Steps

For each of the case study a student report has been created as an immediate outcome of the winter school. Two of these reports were adapted into policy briefs and submitted to the Think20 policy brief process. It is planned to integrate adapted versions of the reports into further publications.

The diversity of backgrounds of the participants helped to bring about and foster creative approaches. At the same time the constant balancing between on-the-ground projects on the one hand and the overarching policy implications on the other, was a challenge that the winter school was not able to fully overcome. While the short duration of the program helped to create and sustain momentum at the same time it did not allow for a sufficiently deep engagement with all issues on the policy level nor on the implementation side. Balancing the two domains remains a challenge.

However, the program was very successful in building connections and crossing the divide between implementers and policy researchers. It helped to foster an understanding among implementers about the challenges of policy makers and vice versa. Working on tangible on-the ground projects helped catalyze the different approaches and brought both groups together in a joint exercise.

The participants left with a better understanding of global policy discussions surrounding the big themes and current crises. They also engaged deeply with very local approaches towards a circular economy transition and left with an awareness of concrete implementation examples as well as practical tools & methods.

One could build on this winter school experience by including some of the outputs into follow-up events such as the upcoming G20 and U20 side event *on Circular Resources for our Common Future: Cities as Drivers*. Especially the projects CASSETEX and E[c]owork seem to lend themselves well as potential examples of addressing the many intersecting challenges of moving towards circular economies.

A program like the winter school can be an excellent way to bring together different stakeholders surrounding a circular economy transition or similar challenges. It can be useful to help create avenues for additional input especially by younger researchers and practitioners into Think 20 or Think 7 processes. An version of this program could play a role in upcoming G20/Think20 processes.