

May 15, 2023

MEMO TO: Traci N.T. Fujita, Director of Council Services

F R O M: Ellen McKinley, Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: **“CLIMATE ADAPTATION, EQUITY & JUSTICE INSIGHTS”  
WEBINAR** (PAF 23-021(8))

The University of Hawaii hosted a March 30, 2023, webinar called “Climate Adaptation, Equity and Justice Insights,” which I attended.

Dr. Diana Reckien, Associate Professor Climate Change and Urban Inequality, University of Twente, The Netherlands, presented the first part of the webinar.

She made some general comments:

- Growing evidence shows that vulnerable people and systems are disproportionately at risk from climate change.
- Vulnerable people have fewer resources and are least likely to be heard, recognized, and prioritized in climate-change-adaptation planning. Consequently, they are less likely to have the capacity or resources to adapt.
- Conscious efforts must be made to put equity first in climate adaptation and mitigation.
- Adaptation is more thoroughly implemented and effective when justice is considered and participation is greater.
- Adaptation can have ancillary benefits to those living in rural or blighted areas:
  - Social safety;
  - Improved roads;
  - Reliable energy;

- Clean water;
- Food security;
- Green buildings;
- Green spaces;
- Renewable energy; and
- Sustainable transportation.

Dr. Reckien also spoke on global climate justice:

- Climate justice generally includes these principles:
  - Distributive justice – allocating burdens and benefits among individuals, nations, and generations;
  - Procedural justice – engaging diverse voices in the process and decision making, including diverse cultures and perspectives; and
  - Restorative justice – using adaptation to remedy past injustices
- The Urban Climate Change Research Network (UCCRN) is like the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) for urban areas. The UCCRN is working on the Third Assessment Report for Climate Change in Cities (ARC3.3), to be published in 2024. The ARC3.3 looks at cities across the globe and will include justice considerations in every component. The latest IPCC AR6 WGII report also includes justice outcomes of adaptation globally.
- Procedural justice means inclusive governance and must examine and target adaptation for these groups:
  - Gender;
  - Ethnicity;

- Disability;
  - Age;
  - Indigenous people;
  - Racial and ethnic minorities;
  - Migrants; and
  - Low income (largest group of concern).
- Dr. Reckien identified some of the best adaptation options for vulnerable groups:
    - Social safety nets;
    - Farm- and fishery-practice adjustments;
    - Dietary changes and food-waste reduction; and
    - Health and health-system adaptation.

The second part of the webinar was a presentation by Hailey Campbell, Adaptation Specialist with the City and County of Honolulu's Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resilience (CCSR), and Emily McKeenie, Climate Equity Manager, CCSR. Their website is <https://www.resilientoahu.org/>

The CCSR was created by voters in 2016. Since then, it has:

- Adopted the Ola O'ahu Resilience Strategy in 2019;
- Adopted the One Climate, One O'ahu Climate Action Plan 2020 – 2025 in 2021; and
- Been working on Climate Ready O'ahu, expected in Summer 2023.

Climate Hazards and Social Vulnerability on O'ahu include:

- Shocks (acute impacts):
  - Hurricanes; and
  - Flash flooding.
- Stresses (chronic impacts):
  - Increasing temperature;
  - Sea-level rise and coastal erosion; and
  - Decreasing precipitation.

The Climate Ready O’ahu plan will identify strategies to:

- Ensure infrastructure safety;
- Prepare people for the impacts of climate change;
- Mālama ‘āina;
- Preserve the culture;
- Build resilience to the island’s climate threats and impacts through community-centered, equity-based, and data-driven strategies; and
- Prioritize the ALICE communities and Social Vulnerability Index communities because they will have the most trouble adapting.

This plan incorporates equity by collaboratively designing the process and investing in and maintaining long-term relationships with each community. To get more collaboration, the City paid for community members’ time and made the process intergenerational, encouraging students to bring their ‘ohana to meetings.

The Climate Ready O’ahu team learned these lessons in the engagement process:

- Adequate funding needs to be in the budget.
- The City's procurement regulations prohibited payments to community members, so they used outside funds;
- Mistrust of government is a barrier to participation;
- Reframing the perspective can lead to greater collaboration;
- Quantify social cohesion;
- Reimagine engagement;
- Quality vs. quantity – low turnout does not necessarily mean failure;
- Best practices are not enough – adapt and try something new;
- Indigenous knowledge systems are responsive, adaptive, and validated by science; and
- “Equity in and equity out” – creating equity inside CCSR was necessary to instill equity into the community.

In conclusion, CCSR believes adaptation plans must include climate justice principles and social benefits or they will not have support from the community or provide workable solutions. Communities' needs differ; there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this webinar, which is archived here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sc\\_f1C6whEk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sc_f1C6whEk)

Please let me know if you have any questions.

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cc: David M. Raatz, Deputy Director, Office of Council Services