

Mapping UNSW Impact Global Development

Primary SDG	11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Broad theme	Development projects and pressures on local actors
Research	Improving capacities of local development actors, such as community volunteers and councillors, so they can be more effective
Impact region	Indonesia, India
Faculty	Arts and Social Sciences
School/Institute	Social Sciences
Academic	Dr Tanya Jakimow
Project partners	ARC Decra: funding of \$365,000 from 2013-16
	Panchayat Raj Gender Awareness Training Institute (India)
Related SDGs	5: Gender Equality
	10: Reduced Inequalities

Elevator pitch

Tanya's research focuses on the lack of support local development actors, like volunteers and councillors, receive in development projects, and the need to provide measures such as training to improve their effectiveness and the positive impact of projects.

The Challenge: Local implementers of development are not adequately supported

Development activity is most effective when it includes local people as the decision-makers, implementers and evaluators. Donors and governments promote community-driven development and decentralised forms of governance, and it is local development actors who can perform these roles. Evidence suggests that these individuals are not well supported, have expectations placed on them that exceed what they can do, and lack the capacity to perform their role effectively.

Tackling the challenge: Document lack of support, provide training and education

Tanya conducted ethnographic research with two types of local 'development actors': volunteers in a community development program in Medan, Indonesia, and women municipal councillors in Dehradun, India. In Medan, Tanya found that volunteers were highly motivated to perform their role, and were able to achieve positive outcomes in their neighbourhoods with limited resources. At the same time suspicion, cynicism, jealousy, and lack of cooperation with local government officials created challenges for these volunteers. Tanya conducted a workshop involving the NGO sector, government, volunteers and community members to discuss possible solutions.

In Dehradun, Tanya found that many women municipal councillors lacked the knowledge and skills to perform their role effectively. The first 18 months of their term was often full of anxiety and fear as they underwent a

steep learning curve, resulting in a negative impression among the community. Tanya identified that they lacked basic training in the period following their election and had scant opportunity to further their skills and knowledge during their five-year term. Working with PRAGATI, a Dehradun based NGO, she has designed a five-year training program for women councillors for which she is currently seeking funding.

Tanya is currently writing a book that examines how volunteers and municipal councillors are susceptible to emotions in their work, and how this shapes their relationships with others.

The Impact: Upskilling women councillors, educating development sector of need for support

Tanya's research highlights the lack of support on the ground development actors (volunteers and councillors) have and the inefficiencies that incur as a result. By training women municipal councillors, she is helping them to be more effective in their roles, and to be stronger leaders for their community and for women. Through her book on the role emotions play for local volunteers and councillors, Tanya is facilitating greater awareness of the pressures on these local actors. Students, academics, NGOs and government will all benefit from these insights, helping to ensure local actors get the support they need to be more effective, enhancing the impact of development work.

Researcher

Dr Tanya Jakimow is a Senior Lecturer in development studies at UNSW. She has conducted research on women's empowerment, agrarian livelihoods, NGOs, community development and urban governance. In her latest book *Decentring Development: Understanding change in agrarian societies* (2015), Tanya outlined the role anthropologists can play in researching development, drawing on her experience examining agrarian change in interdisciplinary research teams.