

Asia-Pacific Network of Early Career Professionals for Global Change Research (APN-ECAP) Platform for Visibility in Global Change and Sustainability

(AOA2023-01SY-Saurav)

APN-ECAP Interactive Workshop: Engaging Minds for Sustainability in Asia and the Pacific

29 May, 2024



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BACKGROUND


The Asia-Pacific Network of Early Career Professionals for Global Change Research (APN-ECAP) stands as an initiative dedicated to fostering the visibility and active engagement of early career professionals in global change and sustainability. Funded by the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research APN Secretariat Japan and implemented by the Center of Research for Environment Energy and Water (CREEW) Nepal, APN-ECAP aims to capacitate and empower early career professionals, bridging the gap between emerging experts and seasoned academics, scientists, and policymakers.

INTRODUCTION

The APN-ECAP Interaction Workshop titled "Engaging Minds for Sustainability in Asia and the Pacific" was held on Wednesday, 29 May 2024. The workshop aimed to reflect on activities carried out so far, discuss project outputs such as the APN-ECAP Handbook draft and governance structure, and facilitate an exchange of best practices and innovative ideas among early career professionals.

The workshop commenced with a video introduction by Ms. Susmita Mishra, setting the tone for the day's activities by highlighting the mission, objectives, and achievements of APN-ECAP. This introduction emphasized the importance of engaging early career professionals in addressing global change and sustainability challenges.

Dr. Dhundi Raj Pathak, President of CREEW, delivered the welcome remarks, introducing CREEW as a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization focused on scientific research in the areas of environment, energy, and water. He highlighted CREEW's expansion into six thematic areas, including groundwater and surface water, environmental health, integrated waste management, circular economy, green energy, and climate change resilience. Dr. Pathak expressed gratitude to APN for their support and collaboration, which has been instrumental in promoting programs for early career scientists.



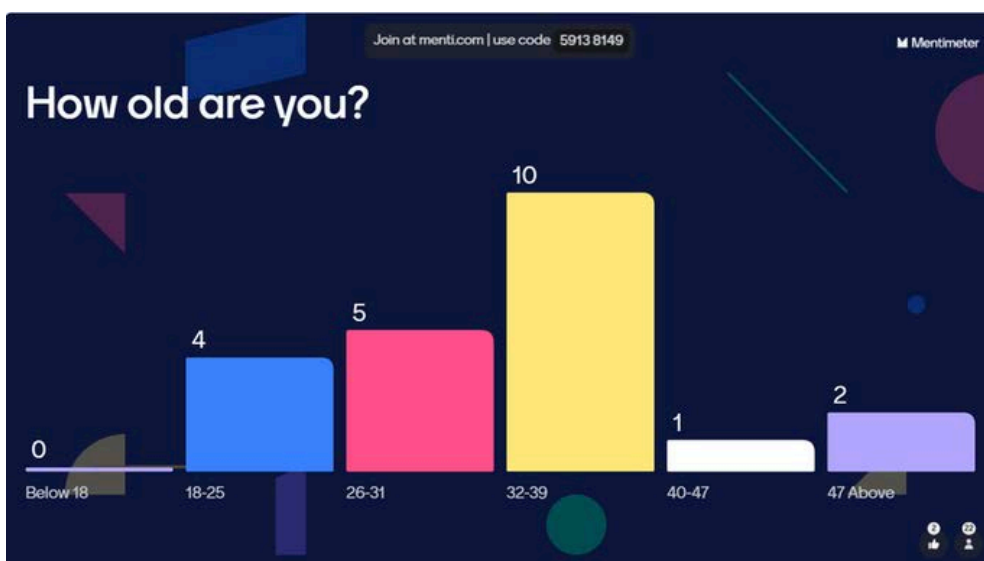
Ms. Naomi Young, Programme Officer at the APN Secretariat, provided an overview of APN, established in 1996, which comprises 22 member countries and focuses on interdisciplinary research related to global change. She emphasized APN's commitment to capacity development, science-based decision-making, and public engagement. Ms. Young highlighted the significance of the APN-ECAP initiative in empowering early career professionals and encouraged participants to actively engage in the workshop's discussions.

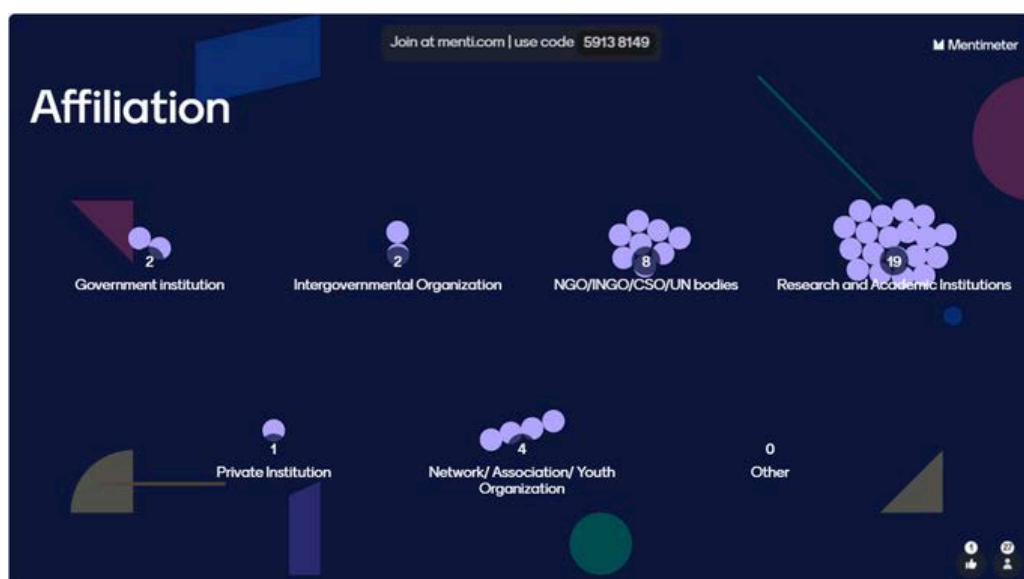
Dr. Indrajit Pal, Associate Professor and Chair of Disaster Preparedness Mitigation and Management (DPMM) at AIT Thailand, delivered special remarks reflecting on his experience as a former APN Proposal Development Training Workshop trainee (Southeast Asia, 2017) and former CAPaBLE project leader. He praised the APN-ECAP program for its focus on engaging early career professionals and enhancing their knowledge and capacity. Dr. Pal highlighted the importance of mentorship and capacity-building initiatives, stressing that young professionals are crucial for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He commended the organizing team and expressed support for APN-ECAP's efforts, noting the platform's role in providing mentorship from senior researchers worldwide.

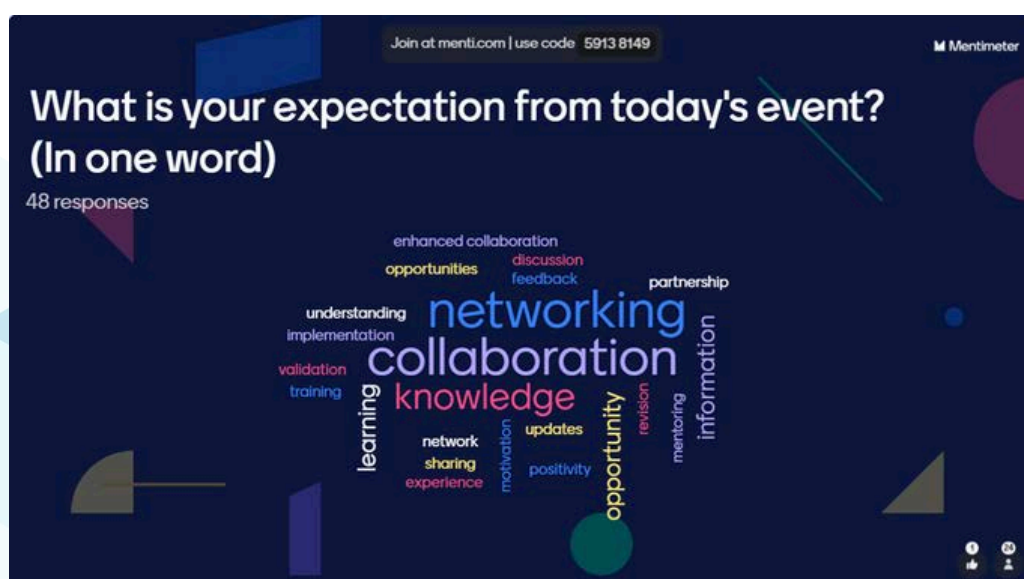
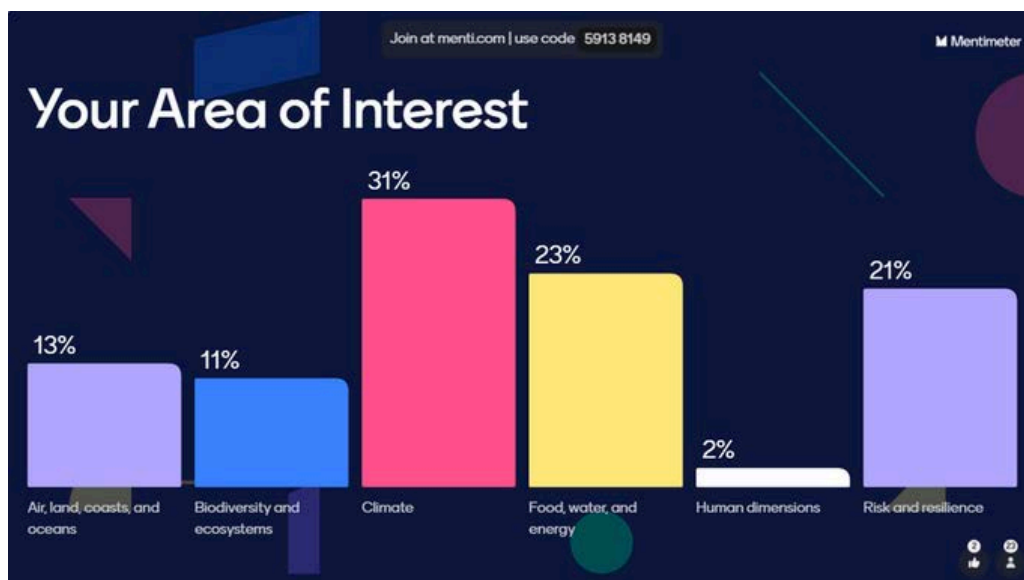
Dr. Madan Lall Shrestha, APN Scientific Planning Group member for Nepal, also delivered special remarks. He shared insights from his long association with APN and highlighted several APN initiatives supporting early career scientists. Dr. Shrestha discussed the Proposal Development Training Workshops, the Mitra Award for Global Change Research, and the Collaborative Research for Early-Career Scientists (CRECS) program. He encouraged early career scientists to take advantage of these opportunities and engage in collaborative research activities, noting the importance of integrating young professionals into global change research and sustainability efforts.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Participants introduced themselves, which facilitated networking and set the stage for collaborative discussions. This segment underscored the diverse backgrounds and expertise of the attendees, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. The introductions highlighted the various fields and research interests represented, creating a dynamic environment for knowledge exchange.







ACTIVITIES

Project overview, updates and workshop objectives

Dr. Saurav KC, Project Lead of APN-ECAP and Deputy Executive Director of CREEW, provided an overview of the workshop objectives and updated participants on the project's progress. He thanked participants for their commitment, especially those joining from different time zones. Dr. KC reviewed the project timeline and key milestones since its inception in September 2023, emphasizing the importance of the APN-ECAP Handbook, governance structure, and knowledge products.

Dr. KC outlined the primary goals of APN-ECAP, which include fostering collaboration, access to knowledge, and information exchange among early career professionals. He highlighted key activities, such as the Proposal Development and Training Workshop (PDTW) and the APN-ECAP Kick-off meeting, which drew significant participation and facilitated interactive panel discussions with senior scientists. These activities underscored the initiative's commitment to enhancing the capacity and visibility of early career professionals.

Breakout Sessions

Participants were divided into three breakout rooms to engage in in-depth discussions on specific topics:

Governance Structure: This session focused on validating and refining the governance structure, emphasizing transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, professionalism, and competence. Participants discussed various governance models and provided feedback to ensure the structure supports the diverse needs of the ECAP community.

Expectations of APN-ECAP: In this session, participants shared their expectations and aspirations for APN-ECAP. Key points included the need for mentorship, project management skills, and inclusive research design. Participants outlined their anticipated contributions and the support they hoped to receive from the network, offering valuable insights to guide future initiatives.


Functioning Guideline: This session outlined guidelines for the effective functioning of APN-ECAP, including data sharing, organizing conferences and workshops, and enhancing communication strategies. Participants emphasized the importance of clear guidelines to ensure efficient operations and foster a collaborative environment.

Panel Discussion

Representatives from each breakout room shared the outcomes of their discussions in a panel session.

Governance and Ethics: Emphasized the importance of clear governance structures and ethical guidelines, focusing on transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness. Participants stressed the need for mechanisms to ensure adherence to organizational rules and promote ethical behavior.

Capacity Building and Networking: Highlighted the need for developing project management skills, providing mentorship opportunities, and integrating gender equality and disability considerations into research projects. Participants recommended creating databases for data sharing and organizing conferences and workshops to enhance skills. These discussions underscored the importance of structured support and development opportunities for early career researchers.



Communication and Engagement: Discussed strategies to improve communication within the network, including leveraging social media platforms. Participants emphasized the importance of effective communication to keep members informed and engaged. Suggestions included using platforms like Twitter and community boards to enhance collaboration and visibility.

Appreciation and Way Forward

Dr. Linda Anne Stevenson, Acting Director at the Secretariat of APN, and Ms. Naomi Young concluded the workshop by expressing appreciation for the participants' contributions. Dr. Stevenson highlighted the significant work ahead for APN-ECAP and reiterated the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for early career professionals. Ms. Young summarized the key takeaways from the workshop and outlined the next steps, including the implementation of feedback and enhancement of governance structures. She emphasized the collective commitment to sustainability and global change and encouraged participants to continue their active engagement in APN-ECAP activities.

Dr. Stevenson also acknowledged the valuable feedback provided by participants on governance, ethics, and professional conduct, which will form the foundation of APN-ECAP's operational framework. She highlighted the priorities of transparency, accountability, inclusiveness, professionalism, and competence in guiding the network's activities.

CONCLUSIONS

The APN-ECAP Interaction Workshop successfully brought together ECPs to discuss and validate the progress of APN-ECAP initiatives. The workshop fostered a sense of ownership and accountability among participants and provided a platform for sharing expectations and comments on the ongoing activities for improvement. The insights gathered will play a crucial role in shaping the future direction of APN-ECAP and ensuring its continued impact on global change research and sustainability in the Asia-Pacific region.

The workshop concluded with a call to action for participants to remain actively involved in APN-ECAP activities, contribute their expertise, and collaborate to drive sustainable change. The collaborative spirit and diverse perspectives shared during the workshop underscored the importance of intergenerational dialogue in addressing global sustainability challenges.



"The APN-ECAP program is an exceptional platform that provides a large number of professionals with mentorship from senior researchers worldwide and across the region. Investing in the capacity enhancement of young professionals is paramount."

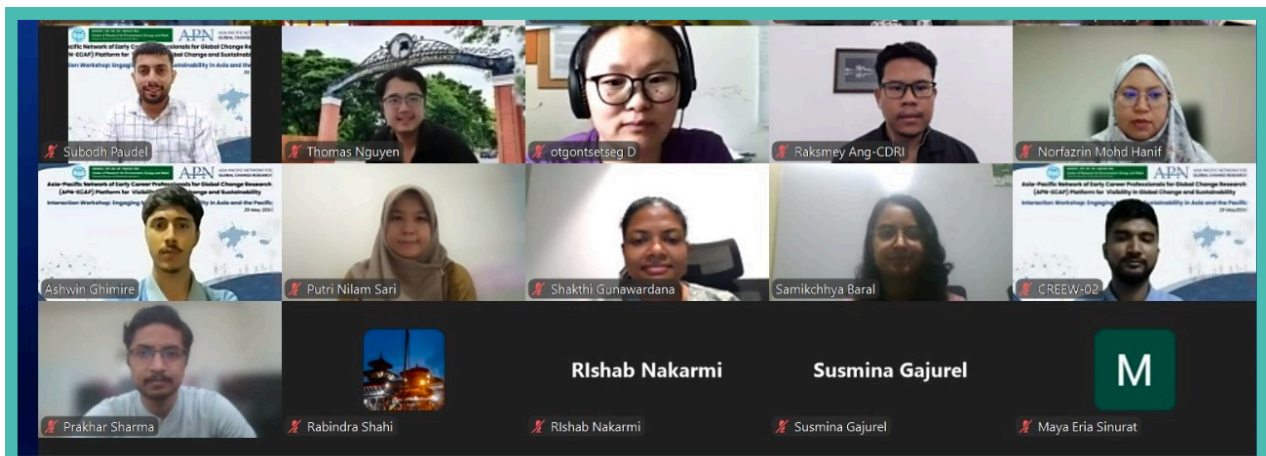
-Dr. Indrajit Pal, Associate Professor and Chair of Disaster Preparedness Mitigation and Management (DPMM) at AIT Thailand



"APN's initiatives aim to provide a platform for young researchers to collaborate and conduct impactful research. I encourage early-career scientists to take advantage of these opportunities and engage in discussions and interactions through platforms like APN-ECAP."

-Dr. Madan Lal Shrestha, APN Scientific Planning Group member for Nepal

ANNEX



INTERACTION WORKSHOP

ANNEX

Asia-Pacific Network of Early Career Professionals for Global Change Research (APN-ECAP)

Collaborating team:



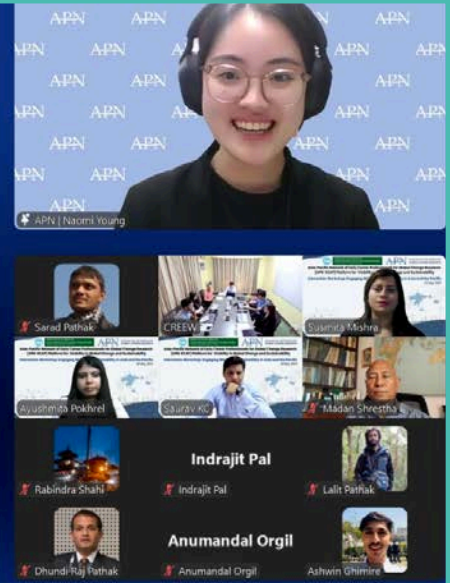
Dr Saurav KC
Ms Susmita Mishra
Ms Ayushmita Pokhrel



Dr Linda Anne Stevenson
Ms Naomi Young
Supporting:
Ms Mia Aranas
Ms Rieko Tamura



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Center of Research for Environment, Energy and Water
Hazardous Research and Development with Nature

APN ASIA-PACIFIC NETWORK FOR GLOBAL CHANGE RESEARCH



Dr. Indrajit Pal

Associate Professor and Chair
Disaster Preparedness, Mitigation and Management (DPMM)
Asian Institute of Technology (AIT)
Thailand



APN introduced the first proposal development training workshop (PDTW) in 2008 under our capacity development agenda.

Past PDTWs



2022
Sri Lanka



INTERACTION WORKSHOP

CONTACT US



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