



Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society II Open Science Conference

INNOVATIVE AND IMMERSIVE SESSION PROPOSAL

ID: PIIS-14

Title: Community responses in times of crisis: from theory to practice

Organizer: Evangelia Drakou & Ilse Geijzendorffer (University of Twente; Tour du Valat Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation)

Objectives: In this open (fishbowl) dialogue session, we invite participants to share their real life examples of alternative responses to failing top-down governance mechanisms of socio-ecological systems. They will demonstrate how under different types of ongoing crises (biodiversity, financial, political), self-organized local level responses, can steer transitions and trigger adaptation mechanisms that allow for sustainable futures of socio-ecological systems. Participants will show evidence of post-crisis societal responses and transformations across spatial, temporal and administrative scales. The evidence collected, combined with available knowledge will help identify remaining knowledge gaps and define new research questions.

Points to be addressed or goals to be fulfilled in the session: The ongoing global crisis - biodiversity, financial, political –drives and transforms socio-ecological systems. The established top-down governance systems considered to safeguard public goods and human well-being, have not demonstrated to be necessarily a safe bet for society. Within the failing top-down approaches, local bodies and civil society groups pro-actively step up to fill the inability of the governance systems to safeguard their livelihoods and manage natural resources sustainably. Through autonomous, bottom-up, self-organized initiatives, such societal groups drive transformations that generate alternative dynamic socio-ecological systems. While such systems have been studied in the past, the reality of the current context generates real life evidence of new types of responses and adaptation mechanisms. Can such initiatives answer a long-term need? How can we harness them to understand and transform high-level strategies and power relationships? Can existing knowledge capture the dimensions of these new initiatives? Which are the new research questions to ask?

Description of how the session addresses the general themes of the conference and promotes cultural diversity: The participants will share evidence of community-based initiatives' response to a perceived absence or failure of high-level governance systems to ensure essential elements for well-being. Discussions will unfold around what makes them have a long-term impact in a transforming context. By distilling critical elements of successful initiatives on alternative governance of social-ecological systems this session contributes to theme 1 of the conference, by proposing context-specific pathways towards sustainable futures. We call for evidence of different crises types, scale and geo-

political context, to allow for identifying how crisis-born initiatives may become resilient solutions ensuring access to livelihoods in dynamic social-ecological systems.

Proposed dynamic, space and material requirements: For this open-space session we require a small room of a capacity for around 20 people with two flip-charts, a whiteboard, and no fixed chairs, in order to allow people to present their stories the way they want. We aim at focused discussions in a small but constructive group. The duration of the session should be 1h30minutes. A projector could be requested, if presenters have material to show.

Desired profile of the participant: The session is open to participants willing to share their stories on different societal responses to crises. Those interested should indicate to the organizers in advance: a) their geographical area; b) their socio-ecological system (e.g. small-scale fishermen in Alaska); c) the type of crisis their system is faced with. We seek for diversity of approaches. Potential offers include:

Cultural values help maintaining fishponds in the Czech Republic

The Prespa lake adaptive social-ecological system

Agriculture and wetlands: searching for the balance rather than optimisation in isolation

A dynamic MPA in the Mediterranean

The "back to the land" movement of agricultural reform