



URBAN RESILIENCE UNIT

Newsletter I Oct 2019

Dear Readers,

Season's Greetings to all.

Urban Resilience Unit recently completed one year within NIUA. The last three months has been very eventful with URU participating and contributing to 4 international and 5 national events. We recently organized the Urban Thinkers Campus in collaboration with UN-Habitat India, the Energy and Resources Institute, the International Urban Cooperation, CEGET at Global Compact Network India and the Global Challenges Forum leading to the World Urban Forum 2020. We are also the knowledge partners for the Urban Thinkers Campus which is being organized by Madras Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

This year the Indian monsoon have been above normal. The month of September received the highest rainfall in the century. During the same year some of the cities including Chennai and Surat faced acute water shortage and several people were both directly and indirectly affected. With many rivers and reservoirs benefitting from the excess rain, several urban areas were not being able to cope with the extreme rainfall and were affected by floods and water stagnation. Amidst this in the month of October and November, Delhi was faced with hazardous air quality index leading to severe health hazard to the 16 million population living in and around the National Capital Region.

While the challenges are many, there is hope for a better and sustainable future. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in the month of February did launch the first Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework. We at URU are glad that we could support that framework through indicator development and training to the smart cities SPVs. URU is currently supporting 5 architecture and urban planning universities in incorporating resilience as a part of their course curriculum. In addition to this, through our institutional engagement we have continued to support facilitating webinars by international experts on various aspects of resilience and workshops to train urban practitioners towards including resilience within their projects. Do reach out to us to know more about our resilience training and capacity building events.

With this latest issue of our newsletter we bring to you an update on some of our recent activities. Please follow us at [uru.niua.org](http://uru.niua.org) to learn more and collaborate with us in our ongoing endeavors.

Best wishes,  
Dr. Umamaheshwaran Rajasekar  
Chair, Urban Resilience Unit  
National Institute of Urban Affairs

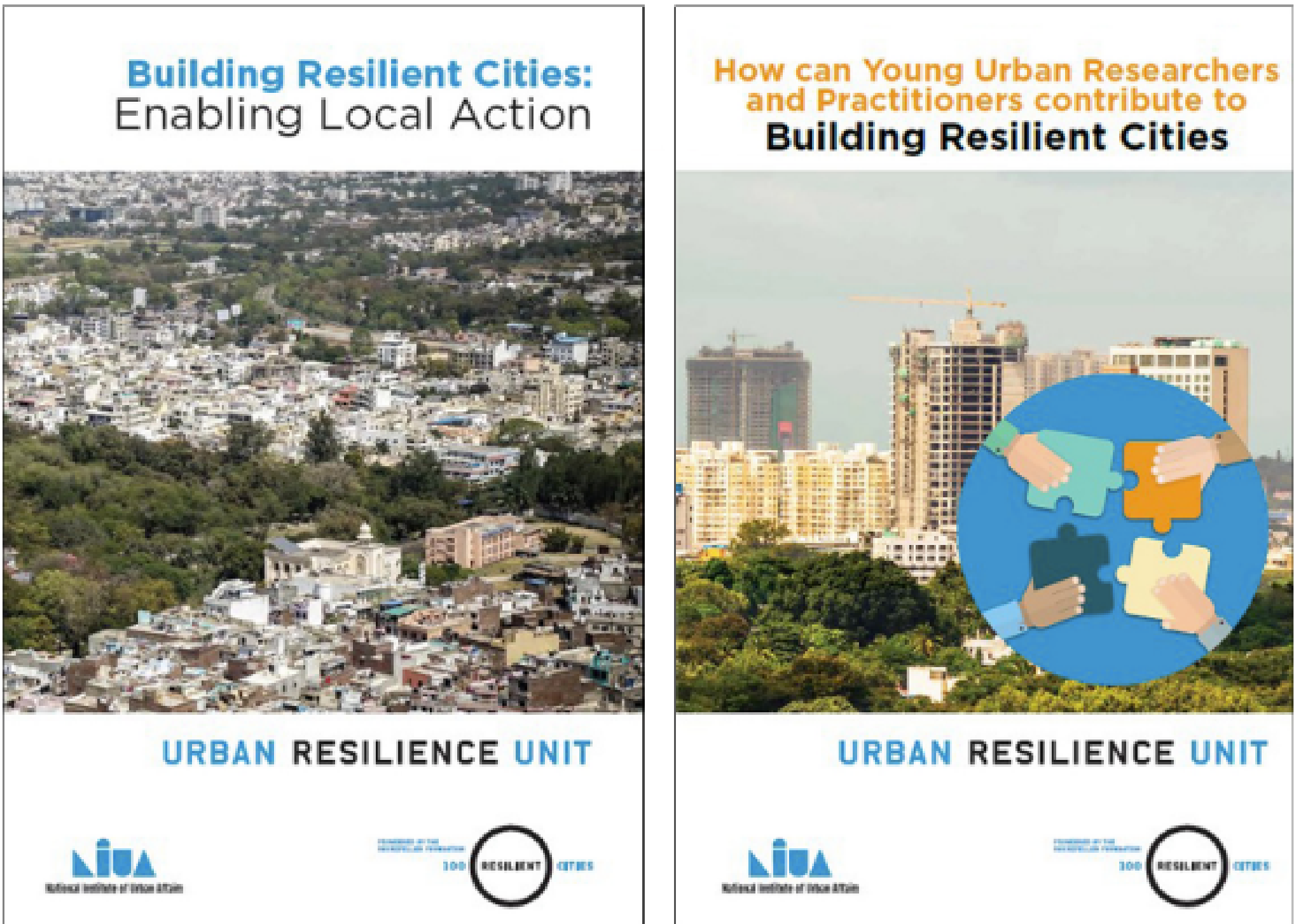
## URU organizes Urban Thinkers Campus: 'The Resilient City We Need'



The Urban Resilience Unit, NIUA in collaboration with UN-Habitat India, the Energy and Resources Institute, the International Urban Cooperation, CEGET at Global Compact Network India and the Global Challenges Forum, organized a two-day Urban Thinkers Campus on the 'Resilient City We Need' on September 25th and 26th, 2019. The two-day campus was focused around four themes: Mainstreaming Urban Resilience Strategies, Strengthening Capacities, Data Driven Governance and Fostering Engagements and Partnerships. On Day 1 of the Campus, experts from around the country participated in four urban labs to deliberate on actionable strategies around these four themes to build urban resilience. On day 2 of the Campus, five plenaries were held to discuss the Future of Urban India, the Resilient City we Need, Leveraging the SDGs, the Co-Benefits of Climate Action and Disaster Risk Reduction and Urban Innovation.

URU will be taking forward the outcomes and recommendations from the Campus to the World Urban Forum, which will take place in Abu Dhabi in February 2020.

## URU launches briefs to enable local action on resilience for city officials and young urban practitioners



With an objective to communicate the value of investing in resilience initiatives, URU has developed targeted and customized briefs to help city stakeholders understand their role for implementing resilience building action.

The first brief, titled 'Enabling Local Action', suggests a 7-point action plan for cities to develop and implement resilient urban solutions, and how city mayors, commissioners and engineers can champion and enable this process. The brief also highlights case examples from various Indian cities that have mainstreamed and translated city level resilience agenda into action.

The second brief focuses on how young urban researchers and practitioners can contribute to building resilient cities in India. This publication introduces the concepts of resilience as understood globally and in the context of Indian cities, and discusses the various approaches they can adopt to develop resilience plans and projects for their communities.

The two briefs were released and disseminated at the Urban Thinkers Campus Delhi on 25-26 September, 2019.

Read more at: <https://uru.niua.org/resources>

## URU kicks off second webinar series on Building Resilient Cities



URU commenced its second webinar series in September 2019 with four webinars from distinguished experts. The first webinar on September 5th opened with Dr. Jennie C Stephens, Director of Northeastern's School of Public Policy & Urban Affairs and Dean's Professor of Sustainability Science & Policy. Dr. Stephens discussed the potential for strengthening energy resilience as an opportunity to create co-benefits of reducing inequality and injustice. The second webinar on October 3rd featured Prof. Qihao Weng, Director of the Center for Urban and Environmental Change and Professor of Geography at Indiana State University. Prof. Weng presented different methodologies to understand surface urban heat island effect in cities. In the third webinar of the series, Ms. Sonia Chand Sandhu, Principal knowledge management specialist with the Asian Development Bank's Sustainable Development and Climate Change Department discussed on the need to integrate ecology and total asset management in planning processes to embed resilience in cities. The last webinar this series was on the 6th November with Mr. Sourav Kumar Biswas, landscape planner and spatial analyst at Sasaki Associates who illustrated the landscape approach to build Urban Water Resilience through examples from Kolkata and Chennai.

WATCH

## URU conducts capacity building sessions for city managers and young planners



Towards building shared learning and enabling urban resilience action, URU continues its endeavors for capacity building of various city stakeholders in India. Ms. Raina Singh and Ms. Ashali Bhandari from URU delivered a training session on 'Urban Flood Resilience' in the 3-day CITYNET training programme on "Making Cities Disaster Resilient - Challenges and Approaches" organized by the Human Settlements Management Institute (HSMI) from 2nd to the 4th of September, 2019 in Delhi. With more than 15 senior officers from the urban development departments and parastatal agencies at National, State and City level, the session focused on the factors that contribute to urban flooding in Indian cities and key actions that can be taken to mitigate the impact of such events.

As a Knowledge Partner to a 3-day Workshop on 'Building Resilient Cities' organized by Anant National University, URU facilitated a working lab with a multi-disciplinary cohort of students and professionals from 18-20 October in Ahmedabad. The aim of the interactive workshop was to bring awareness and sensitize young professionals on the need to build resilience and build their capacity in addressing complex urban challenges from a resilience perspective. Dr. Umamaheshwaran Rajasekar and Ms. Vaishnavi Shankar from URU introduced resilience theory and frameworks, and provided hands on learning to the participants for innovating forward-looking, risk aware and inclusive urban solutions in their academic and future professional work.

Dr. Rajasekar and Ms. Shankar also facilitated a workshop with the students of Architecture at Anant National University to incorporate resilience in their ongoing studio focusing on rejuvenating creeks in Surat. The workshop has enabled the architecture students to use their creativity in addressing challenges that are beyond design.

## URU contributes to building urban resilience narratives in India and beyond



Through its knowledge networking and engagement initiatives, URU continues to work towards building urban resilience narratives in India and beyond. To this end, colleagues from URU contributed to key national and international events, workshops, and consultations on smart and resilient cities during the last three months.

Ms Raina Singh discussed key learnings from the experience of Indian cities on climate action and the role of data and partnerships in sustaining this action in the workshop on 'Strengthening Non-State Climate Action in Global South' organized by TERI, Oxford University, DIE and ACTS on 18-19 September in Delhi. Ms Vaishnavi Shankar contributed to the National Engagement Workshop organized by ICLEI under the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) Knowledge Accelerator Program in New Delhi on 29th August, 2019.

Dr. Umamaheshwaran presented at the Collaborative for Urban Resilience and Effectiveness event in IIT Madras on 1st July 2019, Chennai, participated in the Global Leadership Program on Circular economy organized by the Government of South Australia from 22nd to 26th July at Adelaide, Australia; presented and was also part of a panel discussion at the 5th Smart Cities Asia Conference on 11th and 12th September in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; presented at the Busan Global Water Forum 2019 in session on Global Prospect on Smart Water City on 18th September in Busan South Korea; and presented on Urban Climate Resilience: Experiences from India at Amity University on 24th September, 2019

Contact us