Project Title: ***Are mountain youth neutral on a moving train?Impact of migrant youth on constructions of rural vulnerability and climate risk in the Indian Himalayas.***

The impacts of climate change in the Himalayan region of India are projected to be catastrophic. Most research has taken a top-down approach to understanding the capacities of human and ecological systems to survive this change. However, the more complex and nuanced fears associated with climate change in the region, related to the amplification of existing inequalities of resource access and a change in functioning of the current socio-ecological regimes have been largely ignored. In particular, the slow demise of agricultural livelihoods coupled with the harsh climate and the increase in industrial infrastructure has aided populations – particularly young men – looking to leave their rural villages and move to towns and cities. Young men’s journeys from the village to the city and back have significant impacts, both for the rural communities they leave behind and the urban spaces they chose to inhabit. Both these spaces are made contentious by the existing framework of power and knowledge, and thus the production of identities for these migrants is embedded within varied socio-ecological dimensions.

This project seeks to explore two interrelated questions. First, what role, if any, is this circular migration of young men playing in helping rural communities adapt to climate change in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand? The existing research on this topic is very sparse focusing primarily on the impact of monetary remittances on community well being.Second, what role does the city play in the lives of these young people? What impact do urban spaces have in terms of knowledge acquisition and formulation, opportunities for political and economic network formation and access, as well as the utilization of urban spaces to challenge or recreate rural class and caste-based relationships.