



SUNDARBANS WINTER FIELD SCHOOL
TRANSBOUNDARY, TRANSDISCIPLINARITY, TRANSFORMATION THROUGH TRANSITIONS
Social-ecological Resilience for Vulnerability to Viability in the Sundarbans' 'Riskscape'

V2V Global Partnership, Faculty of Environment, University of Waterloo, Canada
 in collaboration with
SOR4D ENGAGE Project, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur and
University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh

Venue: Kumirmari K2A Hub, Kumirmari, Gosaba Block, The Sundarbans, India
 January 19–26, 2024

This is our inaugural Winter Field School in the Sundarbans' Kumirmari Knowledge2Action Hub, where researchers (mentors and graduate students), civil society, and local communities will discuss, learn and brainstorm on social-ecological theories and applications, fostering democratic dialogues and exchanges to understand and craft just transitions from environmental vulnerability to community viability in the long-run. The event is not only expected to familiarize participants with paradigms in interdisciplinary social-ecological and environmental humanities research, but also expose them to hands-on skills, outputs and impacts of transdisciplinary and transboundary actions – showcased by the gradually evolving 'living lab' in Kumirmari.

Geographically positioned in the remotest corner of the Indian/Bangladesh territorial boundaries and near the Bay of Bengal, located adjacent to the core reserve forest area, and surrounded by rivers and creeks, making her segregated from the mainland, the island village of Kumirmari is affected by 'multiple disruptive risks' in terms of social-ecological vulnerabilities. Yet, life goes on! The inhabitants thrive through the application and improvisation of situated and contingent adaptive practices (SCAPs) that need to be documented and supported – as they constitute narratives of social resilience and community viability from the ground. The SJSM premise in Kumirmari is evolving as a 'living lab' showcasing the potential of academia-practitioner-community collaborations and as an eco-educational hub, spawning with possibilities awaiting trans-local endeavors and transdisciplinary actions.

The weeklong field school brings together a selected group of up to 20 graduate students and early-career researchers / professionals from academia, government, NGO, and communities. The field school provides a creative platform to deliberate collaboratively and learn about concepts, approaches and methods helpful to achieve a just transition and transformations from vulnerability to viability within the transboundary and transdisciplinary context of the Sundarbans mangrove social-ecological system. The School includes a creative mix of both classroom teaching and field training right in the heart of the world's largest mangrove ecosystem and the fastest growing delta – the SUNDARBANS - with critically endangered species such as the Royal Bengal Tiger, Ganges and Irrawaddy dolphins, estuarine crocodiles and the critically endangered endemic river terrapin. Participants will gain firsthand experience and creatively engage in furthering their understanding and knowledge of just and equitable vulnerability to viability transitions for sustainable transformations, and with concepts and approaches that are novel, transdisciplinary and problem-oriented in nature.

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