



Mobilising Business Schools for Resilience

Leveraging capital for a climate-secure future



Our Mission & Vision

Together with our Partners, we work to advance **climate resilience** by identifying and scaling locally-led innovations, sharing and generating knowledge, and shaping resilience policy and investments.

We envision an inclusive world in harmony with nature that is better prepared to cope with shocks, adapt to change, and transform – all within planetary boundaries.

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Proposed citation: 2025. Mobilising Business for Resilience, Global
Resilience Partnership. Cape Town, South Africa

The problem we are tackling

Across the globe, climate change is no longer a distant threat. Its effects are already unfolding, and it's reshaping our economies, landscapes, and livelihoods. While floods, droughts, and rising sea levels are also increasingly affecting parts of the Global North, the consequences in the Global South are often far more severe. In the Global South, those who have contributed least to the climate crisis are often the most exposed and the least equipped with the resources, infrastructure, and institutional support needed to cope with its impacts. Smallholder farmers face shifting rainfall patterns without access to insurance or irrigation. Coastal towns are eroding, yet lack the infrastructure and funding for protective measures. Many communities battle droughts and floods with limited public support.

Ololade Adegoke, Director of the Nigerian non-profit [SEFFA](#), explains how climate change is threatening the livelihoods of smallholder farmers:

"Climate change has disrupted our traditional farming and hunting communities. Temperatures swing between extremes, and rainfall has become irregular. Heavy downpours now arrive suddenly as flash floods, followed by long dry spells. This makes weather patterns far less predictable. For farmers, these changes mean lower crop productivity, unpredictable harvests, and declining income. As a result, poverty deepens, and people struggle more to sustain their livelihoods."

Yet while the need to strengthen resilience has never been more urgent, the money required to support it remains largely out of reach. Resilience is the capacity to persist, adapt, and transform in the face of change and uncertainty. Experts estimate that developing countries will need up to \$300 billion a year by 2030 to adapt to the effects of climate change and promote climate resilience. Today, current financing levels fall dramatically short. The current climate finance system is complex, bureaucratic, and biased toward big, bankable infrastructure. That leaves countless high-impact, community-based projects waiting on the sidelines of global finance.

There is a fundamental disconnect between where resources are needed and how funding decisions are made. Investors often see resilience as a high-risk, low-return space. Climate solutions that work in fields, forests, and villages are often overlooked or dismissed as too niche or risky. Funding models don't match the needs on the ground. A climate finance expert underlines:

"Too often, perceived risks are based on unfamiliarity rather than real evidence. When capital costs are high simply because of geography or outdated assumptions, we're not de-risking—we're reinforcing inequality."

– Clint Bartlett, UNDP

Meanwhile, those most affected by climate change are left out of the conversation.

'In most global discussions, the private sector is absent, and local communities are brought in only symbolically. What's missing is a space where all actors—from multinationals to grassroots innovators—can meet on equal footing.'

– Jesper Hörnberg, Global Resilience Partnership

Monica Borrero from the [UNDP Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator](#) (AFCIA) underlines that innovative responses are urgently needed to match the scale of the crises:

"The scale of the challenge is enormous, but it is also an opportunity to rethink how solutions are designed and scaled. When we connect grassroots innovators with the resources they need, we see how local ideas can grow into powerful drivers of resilience. This approach contributes to transforming how societies adapt to climate risks and creating pathways towards more inclusive and sustainable futures."



A unique initiative with tangible outcomes

Building on this vision, UNDP, the Global Resilience Partnership launched “Mobilising Business Schools for Resilience” — an innovative initiative aimed at turning the challenge of underfunded adaptation into an opportunity. By connecting local leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators building resilient futures with those who can fund them, the initiative centers its work on unlocking finance for climate adaptation and resilience. GRP and UNDP are collaborating with leading institutions — Yale School of Management, Saïd Business School at Oxford, and the UCT Graduate School of Business — who were among the first to support and shape this initiative.

“This initiative shows how universities can become spaces of innovation where students, investors, entrepreneurs, and researchers come together not only to learn how things work but also re-imagine how they could work better and co-create new approaches of tackling climate change challenges and risks.”

– Annika Surmeier, University of Cape Town

“Mobilising Business Schools for Resilience” is building bridges between worlds that rarely connect – from smallholder farmers in Uganda to global finance executives in New York. It does this by creating a dynamic learning and collaboration platform and goes beyond an academic exchange or panel discussion. It is a global platform where real solutions are shaped and collective action is catalysed. Here, investors meet entrepreneurs, students work alongside policy experts, and business schools become bridges between capital and innovation. By pairing theory with hands-on engagement, it empowers both capital providers and adaptation and resilience entrepreneurs to work together from the outset. What makes this initiative unique is its emphasis on mutual learning and co-creation.

“We’re not prescribing solutions from afar; we’re building them together, grounded in the lived realities of those facing climate risks daily.”

– Clint Bartlett, UNDP

“This community isn’t just about knowledge-sharing—it’s about co-creating solutions that actually get funded and scaled.”

– Todd Cort, Yale University

An example of this work in action is the collaboration with Mountain Harvest, an innovative Ugandan agribusiness that partners with smallholder coffee farmers to promote climate-smart, regenerative agriculture. With support from the initiative, Mountain Harvest developed a financing model that provides farmers with affordable loans to invest in better post-harvest processing. Better processing means higher-quality coffee. That opens access to premium markets—and better prices. Farmers earn more, the company builds a stable supply base, and the environment benefits, too.

Kenneth Barigye, Mountain Harvest’s Managing Director explains:

“We know what works in our communities, but scaling those solutions requires capital and trust. This initiative has helped us connect with investors who believe in our long-term vision and in the potential of our farmers to thrive despite climate challenges.”

Corina Angheloiu from the Global Resilience Partnership (GRP) adds:

“Mountain Harvest shows the power of partnership. When local innovators work hand in hand with global actors, resilience moves from small projects to real systems change. These collaborations prove that solutions rooted in communities can also shape markets and policies at scale.”

A focus on local leadership

Mobilising Business Schools for Resilience is a platform for practical, solution-driven engagement, and grounded in the lived experiences of people on the frontlines of climate change. At its core are the principles of locally led adaptation, which emphasise the importance of local knowledge, priorities, and leadership in shaping responses to climate risks. These principles put those most affected by climate change centre-stage and offer guidance on how adaptation should be designed, governed, and financed. They also serve as a reminder that effective adaptation requires finance that is accessible, flexible, and accountable to communities. Without these principles, well-intended efforts may unintentionally sideline local voices and weaken community ownership.

Based on the principles of locally led adaptation and rooted in the realities of the Global South, Mobilising Business Schools for Resilience equips future business leaders to engage meaningfully with climate challenges, while offering investors a clearer path to support scalable, high-impact solutions. Its work simultaneously happens on the ground, in classrooms, and in boardrooms:

Fellowships: Business school students work with adaptation and resilience entrepreneurs to refine business models, develop financial strategies, and prepare for investor pitches. These projects create lasting relationships, often extending beyond graduation.

Teaching cases: Faculty write and teach cases based on live adaptation and resilience projects, bringing resilience finance into mainstream education. These cases are distributed globally and shape how climate finance is taught in classrooms from Cape Town to Copenhagen.

Panels and forums: Project partners speak at the UN Climate Change Conferences (UNFCCC COPs), investment summits, and global platforms, pushing adaptation and resilience finance to the top of the agenda. This influences discourse and policy by putting real examples on stage.

Collaborative workshops: Investors, resilience entrepreneurs, development partners and policymakers come together to co-create financing models that work in practice. Design-led sessions generate actionable outputs, from pilot funding mechanisms to new assessment tools.

This multi-pronged approach creates positive feedback loops between practice and learning. Students test frameworks in the real world. Adaptation and resilience entrepreneurs gain insights from cutting-edge research. Investors discover how to better assess and de-risk adaptation and resilience ventures. It's a learning ecosystem that grows with every project.

'Being part of the network is very valuable. This gave me a grounded, real-world case to teach from—something very different from the usual multinationals we focus on in class. It challenged my students to think about what resilience means when you're working in places with limited infrastructure or resources.'

– Abrar Chaudhury, Oxford University



Who's involved and why it works

The strength of this initiative comes from its diverse and committed partnerships. Mobilising Business Schools for Resilience is a growing network of:

Adaptation and Resilience entrepreneurs are developing community-based flood solutions, climate-smart farms, and sustainable water systems, among other solutions that respond directly to the needs of their communities. These locally grounded innovators are designing and delivering adaptation and resilience strategies that are effective, inclusive, and scalable.

Investors seeking sustainable, high-impact opportunities in resilience finance. By engaging directly with entrepreneurs and adaptation and resilience experts, they are encouraged to rethink traditional risk models and identify new pathways to finance climate solutions that generate both social and financial returns.

Business schools are embedding adaptation and resilience into their curricula and practical applications, reshaping how adaptation and resilience opportunities in the Global South are perceived and valued by investors. Through case writing, teaching, and direct project engagement, they are equipping students and executives to lead in a climate-resilient economy.

Development partners like UNDP and GRP play a catalytic role in scaling adaptation and resilience. They help identify promising initiatives, support early-stage growth, and connect projects with investors and policy networks. Their involvement ensures these efforts are locally led and inclusive, and brings credibility and momentum to community-driven climate solutions.

Students and alumni are shaping the future of climate finance from the ground up. Through internships, consulting projects, and research engagements, students bring fresh thinking and practical business skills to support adaptation and resilience initiatives. Alumni go on to embed resilience thinking in their careers across finance, consulting, and development, helping mainstream adaptation and resilience in global business and investment circles.

This model of collaboration benefits everyone involved. Adaptation and resilience entrepreneurs receive critical support to strengthen and grow their initiatives—from funding and mentorship to greater visibility with potential investors. Investors, in turn, gain insight into promising, underexplored markets and the opportunity to support scalable innovations that deliver both social and financial returns. Business schools and development partners help build the bridge between innovation and investment, while strengthening their relevance and impact. They equip students and alumni to apply their learning in meaningful, hands-on ways — and in doing so, shape the future of climate finance.



"The fellowship was truly transformative. It turned climate finance from an abstract concept into something tangible and practical. I realised how urgent climate adaptation is, and that business has a critical role to play. We can't afford to wait, and this experience showed me how I can be part of the solution."

— Chidule Banda, CEMS MIM student, University of Cape Town

This sense of transformation was echoed by Juan Carlos Uzoukwu Muñoz, MBA student at ESMT Berlin, who worked closely with [ISEED Jamaica](#):

"Working on the ground in Jamaica was life-changing. It wasn't just about spreadsheets or digital tools—it was about understanding why the work mattered: because of the kids, because of the community, because people's futures were at stake. Meeting Tracey, the founder of the organisation, was itself a life lesson—her vision and determination are profoundly inspiring. I'll always be grateful for that experience. It taught me to ask of every role I take: will this create real value for society?"

The student reflections resonate with the progress on the ground. With access to grant funding, new partnerships, and wider networks, local adaptation entrepreneurs are strengthening their organisations and building resilience. For example, [in Brazil](#), a local farming group turned a small innovation grant into a sustainable business model by combining açai farming with forest restoration. [In Ghana](#), local entrepreneurs built a certified seed company from the ground up, supported by financial planning tools developed during the programme. And [in India](#), a community organisation expanded its solar-powered floating farms to boost food security in flood-prone areas. In each case, the combination of early funding and hands-on business support helped shift promising ideas into financially viable, climate-smart enterprises—a major step forward in adaptation and resilience finance.



The Role of GNAM: A global platform for collaboration

A key enabler of the Business Schools for Resilience initiative is its connection to a broader global learning ecosystem. GNAM, the Global Network for Advanced Management, is a consortium of over 30 leading business schools worldwide, established to foster cross-border collaboration on pressing global challenges. GNAM plays a vital role in expanding the reach of the initiative by creating space for shared learning across regions. It brings together faculty and students from both the Global North and South to work on real-world adaptation and resilience challenges and offers a trusted platform for collaboration on innovative finance for climate change adaptation and resilience that extends beyond institutional boundaries. Through GNAM, participating schools exchange knowledge, co-develop teaching materials, and support field-based experiences.

‘This is a pilot for what GNAM could become—a proactive, faculty-led collaboration platform that mobilises academic insight for practical impact in the Global South and beyond.’

– Professor Todd Cort, Yale University

Ways to get involved

Mobilising Business Schools for Resilience is helping build a new climate finance system— one that values resilience, backs local innovation, and drives investment where it's needed most. Through collaboration, innovation, and leadership, it is making adaptation and resilience part of the mainstream. This work is grounded in the belief that adaptation and resilience projects in the Global South are not risky investments, but powerful agents of change for sustainable development, food security, and climate stability.

‘We’re not launching a new fund or building a new product—we’re shifting a mindset. It’s about changing how people think about adaptation, resilience, and value: not as charity, not as risk, but as the smart, strategic investment it truly is.’

– Clint Bartlett, UNDP

This approach allows the initiative to:

- Surface blind spots in how the private sector perceives risk in the Global South.
- Facilitate trust and mutual understanding through action-based learning.
- Design financial instruments grounded in local priorities and leadership— enabling investments into small-ticket, high-impact climate solutions across underserved markets.

In the coming year, the initiative is expanding its global platform to accelerate collaboration and co-create solutions for a climate-resilient future. This will be achieved by:

- Deepening engagement with local entrepreneurs and ensuring that more grassroots adaptation and resilience innovators lead global conversations so their voices shape how solutions are understood, financed, and scaled.
- Expanding the network to include more business schools across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, with a focus on universities deeply embedded in local contexts and connected to community-based innovation.
- Developing a digital case library that amplifies locally led adaptation models and showcases scalable finance mechanisms rooted in community priorities
- Convening investor roundtables that centre local voices and unlock capital for small-ticket, high-impact adaptation deals — led by those closest to the challenges and opportunities.

As highlighted earlier, at the heart of this effort is a commitment to locally led adaptation — placing local actors at the center of shaping the agenda and designing solutions that work in their contexts. This reminder matters because such an approach is critical not only for ensuring community ownership and relevance, but also for enabling adaptation entrepreneurs and businesses on the frontlines to engage in ways that build trust, ensure lasting benefits, and create real impact by strengthening livelihoods, supporting local economies, and enhancing resilience to climate risks

When finance and business models align with local priorities and leadership, they are far more likely to succeed, scale, and deliver lasting value for both communities and investors. Business leaders, investors, policymakers, and educators all have a role in shaping systems that are more inclusive and forward-looking. By partnering with those already building resilience from the ground up, capital can be directed to solutions that strengthen communities, open new opportunities, and drive long-term resilience. The time to act is now — and it begins by following the lead of those closest to the challenge.



GLOBAL RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP

GRP is made up of 90+ organisations that have joined forces to advance climate resilience. We believe that resilience underpins sustainable development in an increasingly unpredictable world. GRP is registered as a non-profit organisation in South Africa and co-hosted by the Stockholm Resilience Centre at Stockholm University.

www.globalresiliencepartnership.org



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