

ReNew School: Project 14k - Inaugural Project Awards

As part of the Tishman Environment and Design Center's (TEDC) commitment to involving faculty from across the New School, the Center administers ReNew School: Project 14k, an annual grant competition. The competition is open to both full and part-time faculty, and emphasizes interdisciplinary research, practice and service opportunities for students, as well as community engagement. Projects should be designed to address critical issues generated by the impacts of climate change and other environmental threats to community well-being and social justice. There will be a grant competition for the 2016-2017 academic year, which will be announced later this year.

We are pleased to announce the inaugural set of grants, for the academic year 2015-2016. The projects are:

Mitigation and Adaptation Policies against Climate Risk

Principal Investigator: Willi Semmler (New School for Social Research)
Award Amount: \$10,000

Recent research by the International Panel on Climate Change and other international conferences and research on climate change show that it now is advisable to pursue both mitigation and adaptation policies. Dr. Semmler, the co-editor of the new Oxford University Press Handbook of The Macroeconomics of Global Warming, has advanced modeling and empirical studies in both mitigation and adaptation. This planned project will employ a simple economic Integrated Assessment Model (IAM), to be calibrated in relation to empirical climate change data. Some analysts argue that implementing climate stability and adaptation to lessen future climate risk seems to pit current against future generations in the trade-off of economic growth versus sustainability. This project will develop a better way to deal with this trade-off problem. The research will introduce a novel angle towards climate justice, proposing a behavioral economics solution to elicit future-oriented loss aversion.

Understanding Climate Change and Urban Health Using a Syndemic Modeling Approach

Principal Investigator: Ivan Ramirez (Eugene Lang)
Award Amount: \$10,000

Extreme weather events have increased in the United States and globally, causing disruption of social and economic activities and human health impacts. Hurricane Sandy, for example, cost the U.S. government an estimated \$ 79 million in aid, which does not include health costs (NRDC 2013). It is also anticipated that extreme weather events

(e.g., hot extremes, heat waves, and heavy precipitation) will become more frequent in the near future because of rising global average temperatures, which have increased by 0.8 °C since 1880. Furthermore, it is expected that rising sea-levels will cause coastal cities, in particular, to experience increased vulnerability to flooding (IPCC 2013). Importantly, the brunt of extreme weather-related impacts will fall upon the most disadvantaged subpopulations, which concentrate in cities (Barata et al. 2011). Moreover, health effects occur within a context of existing social and health disparities. Understanding how climate change and weather extremes will impact urban areas in general, and minorities and poor subpopulations in particular is an important area of environmental health research that will contribute greatly to the public health of cities.

The aim of this project is to examine the synergistic effects of climate change and social deprivation on health vulnerability and resilience of urban areas. Specifically, the project will focus on two study areas in the U.S. and Peru. It builds upon current research that focuses on chronic disease persistence in New York City, U.S. and infectious disease emergence in Piura, Peru.

Connect the Dots

Principal Investigator: Timon McPherson (New School for Public Engagement)
Award Amount: \$10,000

Connect the Dots is an urban ecology and design project to innovate connections between fragmented, disconnected urban green spaces (dots). Ecological spaces in New York City, like most cities, struggle because of lack of corridors and connections between parks and smaller green spaces that can allow species and genetic material to move. Improving the mobility of urban species and building a networked ecological infrastructure will have benefits far beyond individual species, serving as a source for innovating ways to increase the amount of green space for the health and wellbeing of New Yorkers, especially in underserved areas of the city. Green spaces are fundamental to livability, equity, resilience and sustainability and corridors and green space connectivity is essential to a healthy urban ecology. Connect the Dots will develop ecologically based designed solutions for linking parks, street trees, green streets, green roofs and walls, and micro-urban spaces (dots) together in an ecological network to improve the lives of plant and animal species and the many benefits they provide for the city.

Designing Endurance

Principal Investigator: Timo Rissanen (Parsons)

Award Amount: \$10,000

Designing Endurance builds on Professor Rissanen's prior research, as well as the [Local Wisdom](#) project that Parsons participated in, on the relationship between fashion design and how users use fashion, focusing on repair and alteration of garments. In the fall, with five participants, Professor Rissanen will co-design and make a series of shirts that have future repairability and alterability built into them. The shirts will then 'live' with the participants for an unknown number of years, with six-monthly check-ups to document how each user is using the shirts. The users will be asked to keep a use log between these check-ups. The project will include video and photographic documentation of the interviews with each user, and the making and fitting processes of the shirts.

Climate Justice: Case Studies of Civil Society in Action

Principal Investigator: Ana I. Baptista (Milano)

Award Amount: \$10,000

Communities of color and low income people are largely urbanized communities that face the greatest threats from climate change and have the least access to resources and institutional processes of decision making around mitigation and resiliency strategies targeted to their communities. Several networks of grassroots activists are actively implementing strategies and engaging in political processes to draw attention to priority actions and interventions that are required to protect against and mitigate climate change. These groups are also innovating pilot strategies such as community power, zero waste, worker cooperatives and energy efficiency initiatives in local urban contexts that can help alleviate poverty and reduce unemployment while addressing climate change.

This research project aims to explore the twin goals of poverty alleviation and climate resiliency and mitigation through the co production of case studies with the non-profit organization, Climate Justice Alliance (CJA). CJA is comprised of over 35 community-based and movement support organizations across frontline communities in the US, focused on the root causes of climate change. The outcome of this research would be to support the efforts of CJA and member groups to amplify their efforts and inform local, national and international efforts to address the climate crisis through a climate justice lens.

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Street Seats Program (A Joint Effort between Parsons & The Department of Transportation)

Principal Investigator: Nick Brinen (Parsons)

Award Amount: \$5,000

The Department of Transportation's (DOT) Street Seats program is a seasonal public space that reclaims portions of New York City's streets for much needed public space. These public spaces generally include seating and tables for a neighborhood to create an attractive setting for eating, reading, working, meeting a friend, and taking a rest. Parsons School of Constructed Environments (SCE) has teamed up with the DOT to create a proposal that evolves the standard design. A Parsons-based design-build "club" comprised of 8 SCE students designed a proposal that will provide thoughtful public space at the Northeast corner of 13th Street and 5th Ave. The 40ft x 6ft design incorporates the necessary seating and tables, but goes further to incorporate vegetation, graphic identity, outdoor exhibition space, and solar illumination. These additional amenities are integrated into the form and construction of the installation, which will be fabricated in house and easily assembled on site. Expect this thoughtful public space to appear in early June until late October.

Green Jobs NYC

Principal Investigator: Rick McGahey (Milano)

Award Amount: \$5,000

Professor Rick McGahey, Director of the Milano School's Environmental Policy and Sustainability Management program, is working on how green jobs in New York City can address both climate issues and economic exclusion of low-income workers and communities. This project will work with ALIGN (the Alliance for a Greater New York) and the New York Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO, to specify economic development and green job options for New York City, stemming from the recent report Climate Works for All. The project will analyze how green jobs proposals can create good jobs for low-income and excluded workers.