



Tishman Environment
and Design Center



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Dr. Ana Baptista's Reflections on Climate Justice in the Aftermath of COP21



**TEDC's Associate Director and
Assistant Professor of Professional
Practice in Environmental Policy
and Sustainability Management, Dr.
Ana Baptista gives her thoughts on
climate justice in the wake of the
COP21 decisions.**

Activists and negotiators are returning home after an intense two weeks of protests and climate talks. The headlines herald a breakthrough agreement that commits countries for the first time to curbing climate change. But for the communities and countries around the world that are already feeling the brunt of climate change's impacts, they are not so reassured. [The Indigenous Environmental Network](#), who demonstrated the beauty and fierceness of their struggles back home against extractive industries stated:

"The Paris accord is a trade agreement, nothing more. It promises to privatize, commodify, and sell forested lands as carbon offsets in fraudulent schemes such as REDD+ projects. Essentially those responsible for the climate crisis not only get their way out of compliance but they also get to profit from it as well." (Albert Saldamando)

In my brief time joining the workshops, conferences, demonstrations and conversations on the streets of Paris, it was clear that the view from the frontlines was markedly different than that of the negotiators. The communities that are already facing a difficult existence with the onset of changing temperatures and rising seas, were

not comforted by the INDC commitments that set us on a path to 3.5 degrees of warming. Nor were they reassured by the commitment to a \$100 billion dollar fund that had few contributors and even fewer willing to commit to helping to deal with the loss and damages that will surely face the most vulnerable. The beauty of what was demonstrated in Paris happened outside the closed-door meetings. A growing unification of movements for climate justice, the deepening of trans-national, solidarity movements across the globe and the creative expressions of people and communities determined to achieving solutions to the climate crisis on their own terms. Ananda Tan, a delegate with the ["It Takes Roots"](#) delegation stated:

"We had no illusion coming into this COP. We knew that the fossil fuel companies had already hijacked the UNFCCC process. We leave Paris only more aligned and more committed than ever that our collective power and growing movement is what is forcing the question of extraction into the global arena. We will continue to fight at every level to defend our communities, the earth, and future generations."

Ananda joined [a conversation at Parsons Paris](#) to reflect on the hopes for climate justice post COP21 and he

encouraged the young students in the room to join efforts to express both Resistance and Resilience in the face of a changing climate and reluctant state action and political will. He reminded everyone that the real struggle for climate justice is rooted in our homes, in our cities and local communities where we can join with others to hold our governments accountable, stop industry from continuing destructive practices and build local living economies that stand as alternatives to the false solutions that powerful interests introduce in talks like COP21. In response to a question from a student artist who was unsure of their place in the global talks, he suggested that artists and young people are the very heart of the struggle for resistance and resilience and that **'Artists make resistance irresistible.'** The real success coming out of COP21 can be found in the renewed sense of commitment among many communities, cities, and people around the world that are now more than ever vigilant and invested in collective action for climate justice. Ananda reminds us of a quote Franz Fanon wrote, **'the magic hands are the hands of the people.'**

