

# **Confronting Confluences of Uncertainties and Unfamiliarities About Subsistence Marketplaces Through Symbiotic Academic-Social Enterprise: Climate Change and Sustainability Education**

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Subsistence marketplaces face a confluence of uncertainties in coming decades, inherently filled with day-to-day uncertainty, overlaid with uncertainty due to environmental issues including climate change, and uncertainty from technological progress and access. This track will use the approach of symbiotic academic-social enterprise wherein research and practice on the ground will go hand-in-hand to realize transformative impact while enriching the research. The somewhat specific goal within the broader framing of the track will be on creating sustainability education for consumers and entrepreneurs in light of climate change. We will use insights from primary research at the intersection of consumption, entrepreneurship, and sustainability in subsistence marketplaces, and secondary research on climate change to create education that can help people cope with uncertainties.

Subsistence marketplaces have been described in terms of uncertainties in different realms of life and even in mundane activities and the lack of a margin of error. Despite progress on poverty alleviation in recent decades, individuals and communities face a fickle reality as environmental issues including climate change can rapidly undo gains and expose vulnerabilities. Domains of subsistence such as water and food, and forced large-scale migrations are some of the unique challenges related to climate change. Subsistence communities are most vulnerable at many levels, such as financial, physical goods, and livelihood. Natural disasters present short-term uncertainties, by the effects of climate change. Another arena of uncertainties for individual living in subsistence marketplaces is in technological progress as well as access, as those who face the greatest challenges, have the least access to technological solutions.

With the confluence of uncertainties is a confluence of unfamiliarities in the developed world (e.g., manager, researcher, educator or student) about subsistence marketplaces. The lack of lived experience and presumptions about subsistence contexts are some of the factors leading to such unfamiliarities. Developed contexts in infrastructure, and access to informational resources, whereas subsistence marketplaces are distinctly different. Moreover, climate change is likely to play out in very different ways in different geographies.

## **Track Goal**

This track of the 2019 TCR Conference will assemble researchers, educators, and practitioners who would work to bridge research and practice to address a specific uncertainty that looms large in subsistence marketplaces, use research to overcome familiarity, translate insights to practice on the ground, and in turn continue the virtuous loop to enriched research and so forth. Climate change will play out in different ways in different geographies. Research at the intersection of consumers, consumptions and specific domains of subsistence such as food, water, and livelihoods can lead to sustainability educational programs that are customized to specific geographies. In turn, such practice can inform and enrich research. The track will push toward this cycle of research and practice in confronting a specific challenge in subsistence marketplaces. Our approach will be a symbiotic academic-social enterprise, blurring research and practice for purposes of enhancing both. Thus, this approach is at one end of the continuum of research and practice in realizing the promise of TCR.

## **Pre-conference Activities**

Team formation: Our approach requires a diverse set of participants across disciplines and sectors. With a core of consumer researchers, the team will be formed to bring in a variety of perspectives and experiences.

Problem generation and specification: Working virtually, the team will generate a variety of problems that fit under the uncertainties described above at varying degrees of specificity. The team will also work to narrow down the set of problems to a manageable set. As this can be an endless process, the rough parameters are as follows – uncertainty in consumption and entrepreneurship in subsistence marketplaces, uncertainty due to climate change, and relevant sustainability education

as the practice of potential impact. Within this somewhat narrower specification, there is much to be specified in terms of particular courses of research and practice. Also unique to our approach, a number of insights will be translated to some piloting in practice in one more geographies, also the site of our preliminary research. To do so, we will work with field teams of the Subsistence Marketplaces Initiative and the Marketplace Literacy Project in India, Tanzania, Uganda, Honduras, Mexico, Argentina, and the US, conducting virtual interviews and trying out pilot efforts.

Shared learning and planning: Track participants will share learning from research and piloting, narrow down the problem further, and work toward a plan for the actual conference.

### **Tentative Conference Schedule**

Day 1 – Morning Session: During the morning session the track team will digest insights from preconference research and piloting and plan out the rest of the sessions.

Day 1 – Afternoon Session: A poster will be developed to summarize learning as well as translate it to additional research and plans for translation to practice. A specific set of questions for feedback and improvement of research and practice will be prepared.

Day 1 – Evening Session: Poster session, learning from TCR tracks and focused questions prepared to receive feedback.

Day 2 – Morning Session: Feedback and learning from other TCR tracks will be used to finalize research and practice plans and prepare a short presentation for closing. In addition, we will develop our plan for writing a competitive submission for the special issue entitled: “Confronting Confluences of Uncertainties and Unfamiliarities About Subsistence Marketplaces Through Symbiotic Academic-Social Enterprise: Climate Change and Sustainability Education,” and for moving to the next stage of piloting and limited rollout of sustainability education in one geography.

### **Post-conference Activities**

Competitive Paper Submission

Rollout of sustainability education in one geography

Assessment and feedback to create future research-practice loops