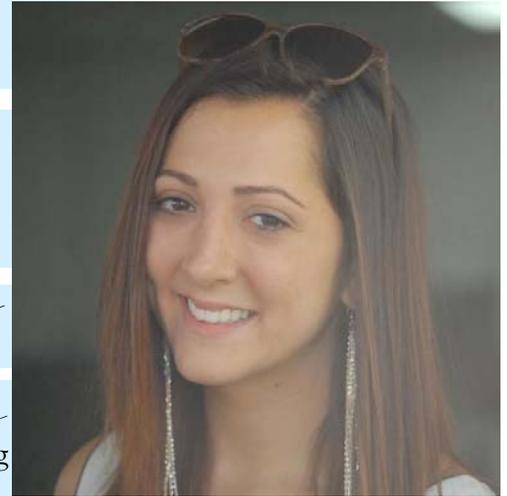


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DISCIPLINES: Climate change adaptation, human geography, sustainable development

KEYWORDS: Local-level adaptation, adaptive capacity, vulnerability, social network analysis, small island developing states



RESEARCH INTERESTS:

The warming of the climate system is unequivocal. The Caribbean region is already facing the impacts, which include sea level rise, ocean acidification, reduced freshwater availability and changes in extreme weather events. Many challenges lie ahead, but actors and institutions at all scales are mobilizing in an attempt to adapt to a changing climate. Strategies are being designed, developed and implemented with the dual purpose of addressing climate change impacts and moving towards sustainable development. The carbon-neutral desalination plant on the island of Bequia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is one such example. In response to changing climate patterns challenging traditional rainwater harvesting techniques, the plant was inaugurated in 2012 to provide freshwater to the community of Paget Farm. The project combined efforts from all scales, including community members, local NGOs, the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines government, the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center and the Global Environment Fund.

Using the desalination plant in Bequia as a case study, Jessica's research seeks to assess some of the social, institutional, political and economic factors that seem to contribute to local-level adaptation. This will be accomplished through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, surveys and social network analyses. The goal of the project is to increase our understanding of the real-world interactions and dynamics that allow communities to adapt to climate change in a way that is effective, efficient, legitimate and equitable.

BIOGRAPHY:

Jessica holds an Honours BSc in Biology and is currently doing her MA in Human Geography at the University of Ottawa under the supervision of Dr. Jackie Dawson, Canada Research Chair in Environment, Society and Policy. To this study, she brings an interdisciplinary perspective shown through her strong academic background in physical and social sciences and her work experience in climate change adaptation through the Laboratory for Environment, Society and Policy.