



**Astrid Hillers**  
**Senior environmental specialist**  
**World Bank**  
**United States**

“Adaptation strategies should be cost friendly and environmentally friendly and, most importantly, they need to support people first.”

Astrid Hillers has been working on evaluating climate change for the last 10 years. She comments that her work at the World Bank stands to benefit from the International Conference on Evaluating Climate Change and Development for a number of reasons. Foremost among them, she believes that it’s important to have a larger conversation than one solely within an agency or implementing body. She says that there needs to be more interaction on the ground, based on common

interests. However, Hillers comments, where this is happening, it could be happening more practically and in a more decentralized fashion.

Hillers recognizes the importance of climate change adaptation (the ability of institutions and people to adapt to the impacts of climate change) and attended the parallel sessions on this topic at the conference. Despite this, she points out that adaptation efforts take time, and she is focused on helping those who need help today, not five years from now. She stresses that it is better to do a good five-year development project and set things up for later adaptation efforts. This is because she feels it’s important to first take care of people who are hungry, need education, or need water before jumping into adaptation planning. Hillers suggests that for this process to be successful it needs to be able to go from the community scale to the larger, national scale.

The larger conversation between countries and implementing agencies should also involve international NGOs and think tanks, as well as subnational and local-level organizations. After all, says Hillers, it’s not just about community projects — infrastructure and policy are all anchored in countries. According to her, it’s also crucial to get buy-in and work with country NGOs from the beginning. Although she admits that working with different bodies, including NGOs, is challenging, it is necessary for success.

Hillers identifies a number of other factors that should be looked at in evaluation programs and projects. She believes that future action should be multisectoral, looking at all projects and all sectors, that old projects and programs should be adapted in light of new knowledge, and that new evaluation tools, such as carbon accounting (calculating the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> that is not released into the atmosphere due to preventative measures), should be used.

In any case, Hillers says, “It’s important to assess the inputs and outcomes, or what we put in and what we take out of these programs.” Monitoring and aggregating up, as well as creating a framework for evaluation with a tangible timeline, are other factors that Hillers strongly believes need to be addressed in the pursuit of effective climate change evaluation. She says that this is all at the forefront of what’s happening with evaluation today and that this could be an important role for evaluators. Furthermore, she comments, this is the ideal time to integrate evaluation into monitoring and tracking. However, in spite of these new possible roles, Hillers emphasizes that there is no need to form a new network. “It would be redundant, like creating a network for the network’s sake alone.”

“That isn’t to say that a larger community of experts shouldn’t be nurtured and encouraged to work more closely in multidisciplinary teams at various levels,” recognizes Hillers. A new multidisciplinary community could work together to build a solid framework to support adaptation and development outcomes in the future. Its members could also work on opening the dialogue to take more issues into account. Hillers maintains that international dialogue on evaluating climate change is currently missing important issues, such as fishing, fisheries, and biodiversity. She adds that although the social dimensions are increasingly considered in development, there’s still room for improvement.

Hillers believes that a lot of good has and will continue to come of this conference. However, she recognizes that there are limitations to a one-time event. She would like to see something similar happen annually to ensure that the community, the dialogue, and the practices of improved climate change evaluation continue to grow. Of course, to be environmentally responsible, she says, future conferences must be cost-friendly and environmentally friendly. In addition, a future conference should include a larger practitioner and NGO presence. Hillers recommends that the conference take on more of a workshop format geared toward producing concrete outcomes.

“Let people brainstorm and hash out ideas, and then we can figure out how to take these ideas and create adaptation strategies, ultimately encouraging more interaction between everyone involved,” says Hillers. And afterward, “participants will all be talking about development and working on developing even better evaluation outcomes.”