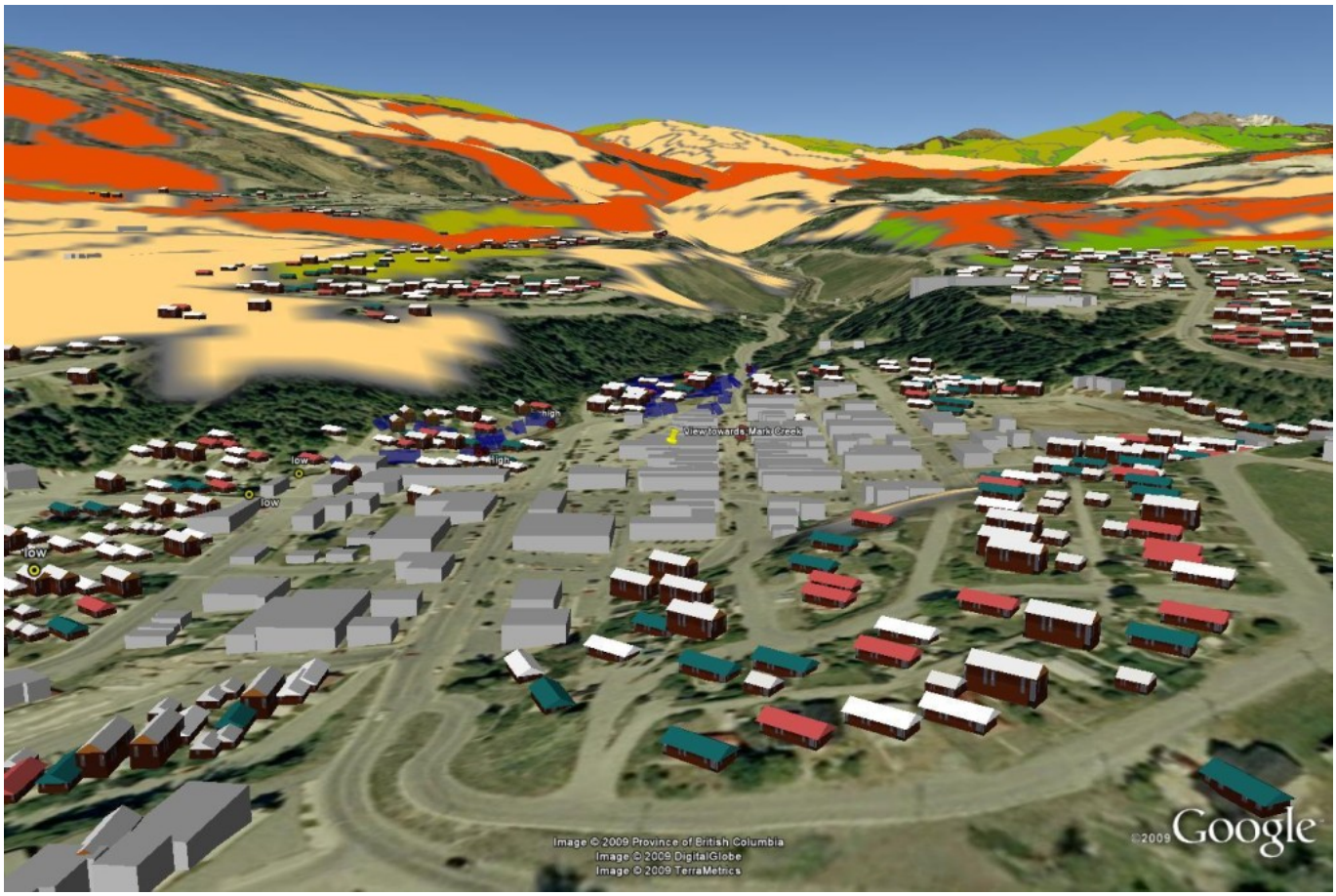
Learning as a Change Catalyst for Climate Adaptation

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by Saleem Janjua

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I. Introduction

Saleem Janjua advocates an analysis of how organizations learn from their own experience, other organizations, and how they develop their own internal understanding and framework for action under climate change.

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II. Policy Forum by Saleem Janjua

Learning as a Change Catalyst for Climate Adaptation

It is important to develop a comprehension of how organizations learn from their own experience, how they learn from other organizations, and how they develop their own internal understanding and framework for action under certain context, such as climate change. Initially, one of the fundamental questions could be: who learns and what.....the organizations or the individuals....or both? Another fundamental question is how learning takes place i.e. how do organizations learn? Individuals learn and afterwards change their attitudes and possibly their perceptions of nearby settings. However, learning also has a number of implications at a collective level, which could change the overall behavior of groups or public sector organizations. This reveals that developing a better understanding of how organizations actually learn is vital for any change initiative.

The studies in this area define organizational learning as the 'capacity' or the 'processes' within an organization that actually allow it to increase the effectiveness of its working. Also, some authors indicate that organizational learning is a 'dynamic' and 'adaptive' process that engages the creation, acquisition and integration of knowledge. Pahor et al. (2008), Beeby and Booth (2000), Argyris and Schön (1996), and Senge (1990) are of the view that organizations learn by the efforts of individuals attached to those organizations, particularly in relation to communications and interactions with internal and external groupings. Kim (1993) considers that almost all organizations learn whether they knowingly choose to or not. Hence, what is critical to bring change within an organization under certain context is not only the learning rate, learning material, and individuals who learn, but also how learning is captured, transferred and converted internally as action. In the literature, policy learning (ideas) is also considered to be an important element for bringing change and innovation in organizations. Policy, in general, is considered to be a series of proposed actions that relates to a pre-arranged, planned and cognizant change in thoughts regarding a particular policy topic. Similarly, change and innovation are considered to be a shift in 'actions', which is mostly due to a

'change in thought'. However, it is important to take into account that change and innovation are both directly and indirectly connected to 'learning' and 'knowledge'.

Climate adaptation is more and more becoming a policy priority for public and private sector organizations all over the world, partly driven by a rationale that successful adaptation reduces the consequences of climatic impacts that are inevitable (Doria et al., 2009; Adger et al., 2005). As observed by Ayers and Huq (2008), organizational change which enables climate adaptation learning is considered crucial to a process of improving climate resilience. However, holding such an opportunity through policy intervention is a major challenge, particularly in the urban sector. Responding to this policy gap, every possible effort should be made to reflect on the application of the learning organization paradigm to the climate adaptation agenda. We need to explore theoretical underpinning to the organizational learning paradigm, as well as examine some of the key characteristics often attached to the learning processes. These conceptual characteristics should be further examined to explore how such a dimension may help support change for climate adaptation action.

III. References

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