

Speakers' Profiles

Welcome: Mr. Niall O'Connor, *Centre Director, SEI Asia*



Niall is SEI Asia's Centre Director since 2016, bringing over 20 years of environment and development senior leadership, programme management and academic capacity to the organization. Niall holds a BSc and an MSc in Forestry, both from University College Dublin, and an MSc in Biodiversity Conservation from Imperial College London, with a specialty in community-managed nature park conservation.

Inspirational Talk: Ms. Angie Mead King, *CEO, Victoria Court and Founder, King Tower Farms*



Angie is an entrepreneur, car enthusiast, vlogger, farmer, and a transgender woman who is concerned about the plight of our planet and is passionate about doing something about it. She currently lives in Manila with her wife for nine years, Joey Mead King, who was a model mentor/co-judge of the TV show 'Asia's Next Top Model'. Angie is an animal advocate and has promoted the adoption of orphaned or abandoned animals rather than buying them. In her farm, Angie operates an apiary of local species of bees.

Angie is a sports buff and she is into windsurfing, wakeboarding, gymnastics, and parkour. Her businesses include hotels, restaurants, and car shops. Angie started Philippines' first corporate social HIV awareness campaign 14 years ago through her hotel chain, the Victoria Court.

Stream Presenter: Dr. Albert M. Salamanca, *Senior Research Fellow, SEI Asia*



Albert is a Senior Research Fellow at the Stockholm Environment Institute's Asia Centre where he leads its Climate Change, Disasters and Development cluster. Albert has over 15 years of experience working on climate change adaptation, natural resources management, conservation, development and sustainable livelihoods issues in several countries in Southeast Asia. His current research interests are on the themes of resilience, risk and vulnerabilities, traditional ecological knowledge, mobility and spatial linkages, disaster displacement, and

sustainable livelihoods. He is a member of the UK GCRF Living Deltas Hub. His recently co-edited volume entitled "Climate Change, Disasters, and Internal Displacement in Asia and the Pacific" was published by Routledge.

He previously led SEI's global initiative on Transforming Development and Disaster Risk and contributed to the Climate Services Initiative through the School of Climate and Living Traditions. Other projects he managed include the Regional Climate Change Adaptation Knowledge Platform (AKP) and the Partnership in Governance Transition: the Bali Cultural Landscape. Albert also contributes to weADAPT, an adaptation portal hosted by SEI. He has a PhD in Geography from Durham University (UK).

Panellists: Mr. **Somchai Rungsilp**, *Manager, Community Development Department of Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability*



Somchai is the manager of the Community Development Department of Asia Pacific Development Center on Disability. He has held a number of positions in the past with numerous organisations working on disability such as Handicap International, Foundation for Helping Children with Disabilities, and HelpAge International. He also has experiences in Disability Inclusive DRR.

He has a MA in Social Development Management from the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), Thailand.

Ms. **Dharini Priscilla**, *Program Manager, Grassrooted Trust*



Dharini has a BSc in psychology and works as a programme manager of The Grassrooted Trust, an organisation that focuses on sexual and reproductive health and rights in Sri Lanka. She works with marginalised communities in Sri Lanka, including the LGBT community, people living with HIV, sex workers and survivors of gender-based violence.

She mainly focuses on conducting awareness workshops and knowledge-sharing sessions around the country about HIV, gender-based violence, harassment in the workplace, and cyber-exploitation and violence. She also travels around the country and talks to youngsters about the value of core principles such as consent, empathy, respect, trust and self-esteem in creating healthy relationships with ourselves and others. She also engages in creative content development especially for children and adolescents to spark meaningful conversations about gender, relationships and sexuality.

She is also the editor of bakamoono.lk (in Tamil), a comprehensive online education platform that offers scientific and updated information on HIV, sexual health, gender and relationships, and violence prevention. She also became a fellow of the Salzburg Global LGBT Forum after participating in the 2019 Forum in Kathmandu, which focused on creating legal and social equality in South Asia. She is also a storyteller who believes in the transformative power of stories in shaping our attitudes and perspectives about gender, sexuality and relationships.

Ms. **Vaito'a Toelupe**, *Technical Advisor to the Samoa Fa'afafine Association (SFA) and UN Women National Coordinator for the Samoa Spotlight Initiative Country Programme*



Vaito'a is a proud fa'afafine from the villages of Malie and Vailele in the Heart of Polynesia, Samoa. She was a first responder in her capacity as the Senior Disaster Management Officer in the Samoa National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) for the 2009 Tsunami and 2012 Tropical Cyclone Evans. She led the Disaster Risk Reduction section of the NDMO which resulted in the early introduction of joint disaster management and climate change adaptation national plans as well as the coherent integration of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in the community development sector. Vaitoa completed her public service with NDMO as the Community Disaster and

Climate Risk Management Advisor and has continued through the Samoa Fa'afafine Association and civil society sector to advocate for integrated, inclusive, relevant and culturally appropriate measures for building resilient communities in Samoa.

Vaito'a as a fa'afafine advocate and community leader is the Technical Advisor to the Samoa Fa'afafine Association (SFA) and in her professional capacity the UN Women National Coordinator for the Samoa Spotlight Initiative Country Programme.

Atty. **Tony La Vina**, *lawyer, educator, environmental expert, and former Undersecretary of the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources*



Tony is a leader, teacher, thinker, lawyer, and social entrepreneur. He is currently Energy Collaboratory Director and Senior Fellow on climate change at the Manila Observatory. He is a professor of law, philosophy, political science, and governance in several universities in the Philippines. He was Dean of the Ateneo de Manila University School of Government for 10 years from 2006-2016 and before that an Undersecretary of the Department Environment and Natural Resources, an international environmental law and policy expert based in the World Resources Institute in Washington DC, and the research and policy director and co-founder of the Legal Rights and Natural Resources Center (known as LRC).

He is currently a Member of the Permanent Court of Arbitration's Specialized Panel of Arbitrators for the arbitration of disputes relating to natural resources and/or the environment and of the Accreditation Panel of the Green Climate Fund.

Tony obtained his Masters and Doctorate in Law from Yale University and his first degrees in philosophy and law from Ateneo de Manila University and the University of the Philippines, respectively. He has been a human rights and environmental justice lawyer for 30 years, starting his law career as an advocate for indigenous peoples and local communities fighting development aggression by logging and mining companies and, in some cases, by the government pursuing environmentally destructive projects. He has been Philippines lead climate change negotiator from the 1990s up to the Paris negotiations in 2015 and is recognized as a global leader in climate, forest, and biodiversity issues.

Ms. **Yugratna Srivastava**, *Plant-for-the-Planet & UN Major Group for Children and Youth, India*



24-year old from India and engineer by education, **Yugratna** has been involved in environmental advocacy since a young age. She works for Plant-for-the-Planet, a youth-led organisation working in 100+ countries focused on afforestation, climate change education and creating adaptation pathways for communities in the global south. She also serves as elected Focal Point of the Children and Youth Major Group (youth constituency) to UNEP and formerly

as global south Focal Point of YOUNGO - UNFCCC youth constituency. In her mandate towards UNEP, she coordinates systematic engagement of youth in environmental processes, including MEAs.

She brings advocacy and on-ground experiences, including having worked on the "Trillion Trees Campaign", served as part of the COP23 Fijian Presidency delegation during 2018, coordinated some of largest youth-led events in recent years such as the ACE Youth Forum, COY14, virtual Youth Environment Assembly (2020), etc; and helped formalised youth engagement mechanisms to multiple UN processes. Having addressed the UNGA, and delivered 3 TEDx talks until date - she has also been conferred awards such as: the "Arbor Day Award" accorded to Plant-for-the-Planet, recognition under "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" by govt. of India on empowerment of girl child, "Youth Icon Award" by state government, "INSPIRE fellow" by the Government of India, among others.

Closing
Remarks:

Mr. **Dhrupad Choudhury**, *Chief, Scaling Operations, ICIMOD*



For a little over two decades, **Dhrupad** has been working among marginalized mountain communities of the Himalayas, initially as a researcher but later, progressively as a development practitioner. His focus of interest has spanned natural resource management, policy and market driven transformations, livelihood security and for the last few years, climate change adaptation and resilience building. His special areas of interest are Managing Transformations in Shifting Cultivation, with special focus on tenurial and access regimes and Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Building. Significant contributions of his work has included the designing, development and

successful implementation of a strategy for managing transformations in shifting cultivation areas (in an IFAD funded development project in India), and the contribution as member of the Technical Support Group for drafting the Scheduled Tribes and Other Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Rights) Bill in India, enacted as an Act of the Parliament in 2007.

During his tenure in ICIMOD, Dr Choudhury has worked on aspects of livelihoods security and approaches for enhancing adaptive capacities and resilience of mountain communities to socio-economic and climate change. His interests have included designing and piloting mountain specific adaptation approaches for strengthening local adaptation and resilience. As Regional Programme Manager, his work included fostering multi-stakeholder partnerships and engagement with policy makers for strengthening adaptation and resilience building at different scales. Currently, as the Chief, Scaling Operations, his responsibilities focus on engagement with governments, the private sector and development agencies for the uptake and upscaling of ICIMOD's interventions across all Regional Programmes.

Dr Choudhury has a D Phil from the University of Oxford in Ecology.