



On a road trip to find common ground

Can the goals of the private sector be compatible with sustainable development?

Ritwika Basu from the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS) visited **Daniel Morchain** at Oxfam in the UK as part of the ASSAR Small Opportunities Grant (SOG). The ASSAR SOG offers young researchers the opportunity to take advantage of the diverse expertise across ASSAR partners.



“We wanted to learn more about the private sector’s engagement in the development of people and communities, as well as its role in supporting people to adapt to climate change impacts. In doing so, we looked at Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) – taking a critical look at where it might sit in the spectrum between greenwash and altruism. Recognising that private sector involvement goes beyond CSR, we also tried to find out more about its role in development and climate change adaptation planning, especially with regard to mid- to long-term planning.”

– **Daniel Morchain**

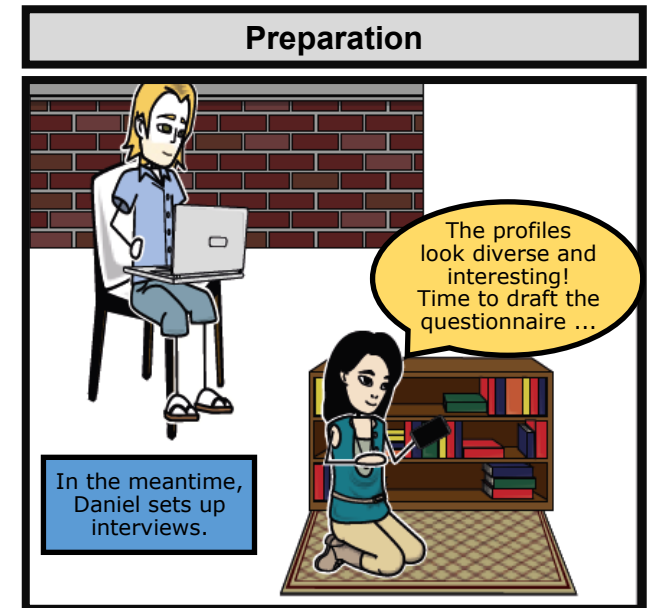
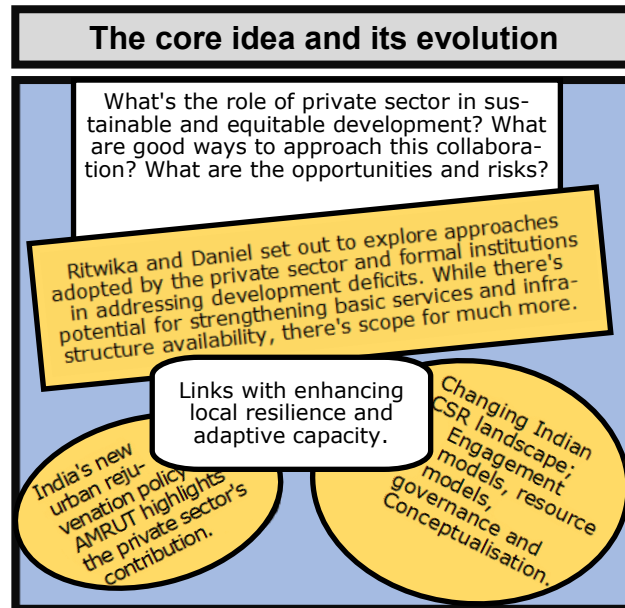
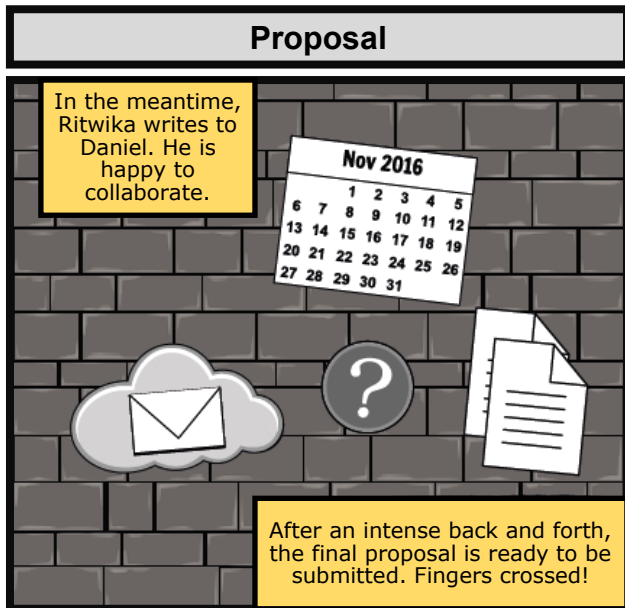
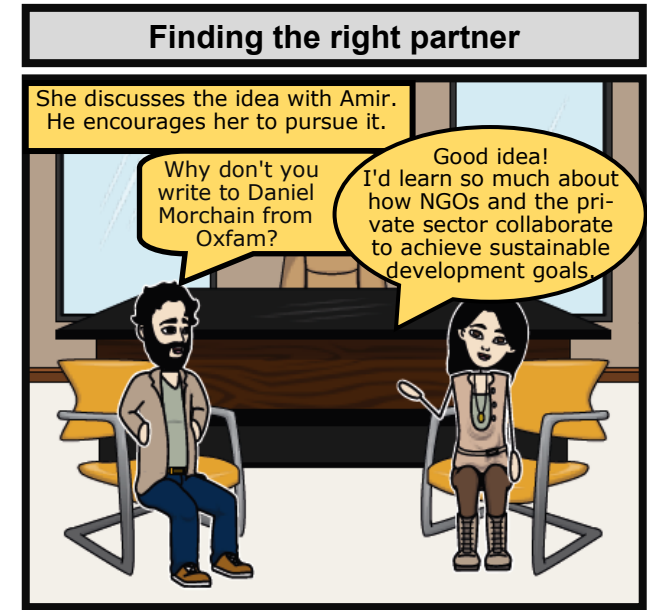
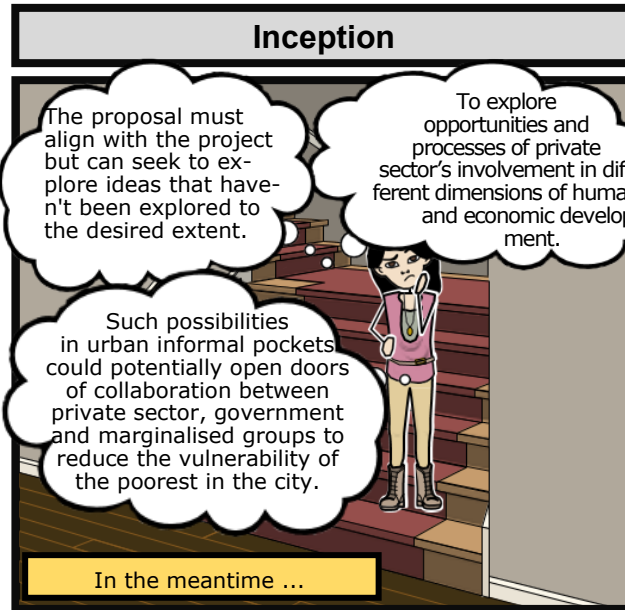
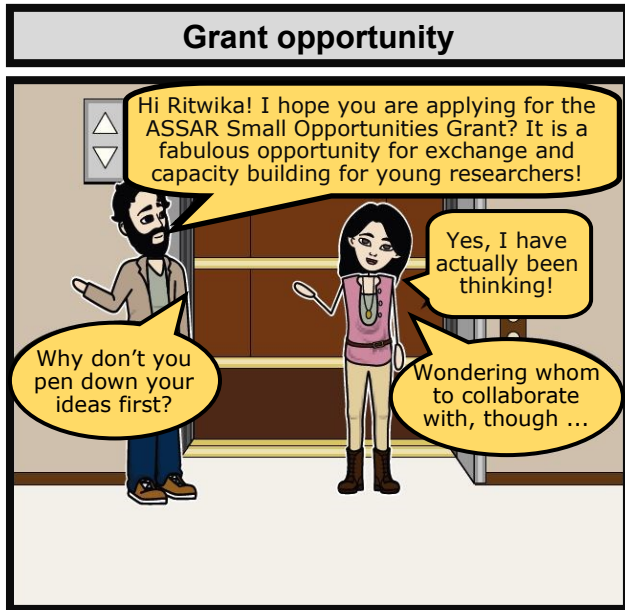
“We learnt about the trade-offs, challenges and incentives of the private sector when it comes to supporting development goals. For instance, while some big players in the food, textile and cosmetic industries have never been more invested in ‘climate proofing’ livelihoods of farming communities in South America and parts of Africa, this seems to be primarily driven by an urgency to secure primary natural resources such as cocoa, coffee and cotton, which are highly climate sensitive, rather than by a long-term commitment to community development.

“Building trust, promoting transparency and maintaining open communications between the private sector on one hand, and communities and NGOs on the other, is considered by all to be a foundational element of keeping partnerships sustainable. To this end, identifying and addressing conflictive issues goes a long way in cementing cooperation and engagement. These are especially important given the long-term horizons required when faced with global challenges such as climate change.

“The initial findings of this research encourage us to contextualise what we learned about ‘how-to-do-it-right’ to the Bangalore context and build a case for involving private sector in development interventions yielding specific adaptation co-benefits.”

– **Ritwika Basu**

The comic strip below represents what Basu and Morchain's first exploration brought to light



Arrival

Finally, the day arrives ...

Ritwika looks around big-eyed, absorbs the tiniest details possible. This is her very first visit to the UK!

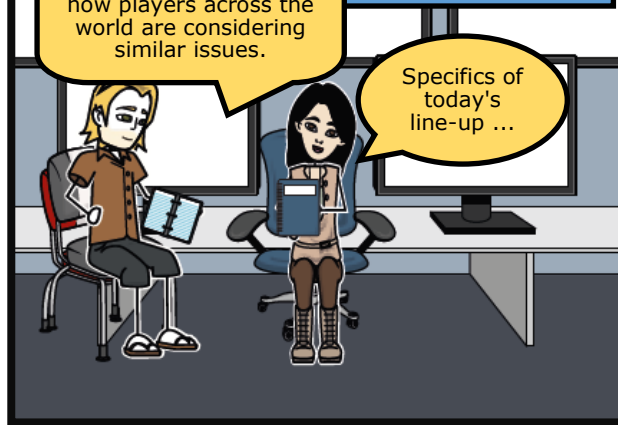


First day at Oxfam

... situate India in the larger global context and help us understand how players across the world are considering similar issues.

Ritwika and Daniel meet in person for the first time. There's a lot to catch up on ...

Specifics of today's line-up ...

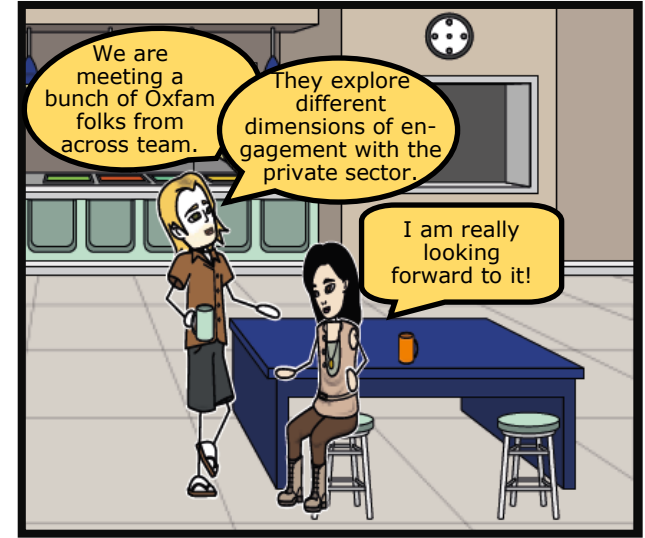


The line-up

We are meeting a bunch of Oxfam folks from across team.

They explore different dimensions of engagement with the private sector.

I am really looking forward to it!



Ulrike Jonas, Private Sector Advisor

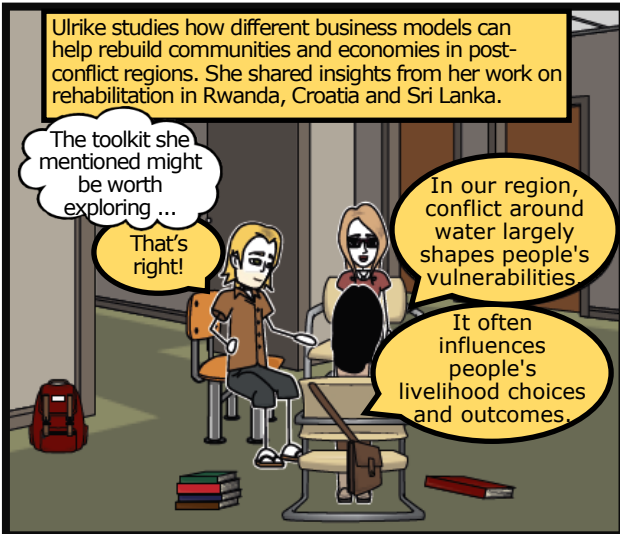
Ulrike studies how different business models can help rebuild communities and economies in post-conflict regions. She shared insights from her work on rehabilitation in Rwanda, Croatia and Sri Lanka.

The toolkit she mentioned might be worth exploring ...

That's right!

In our region, conflict around water largely shapes people's vulnerabilities

It often influences people's livelihood choices and outcomes.

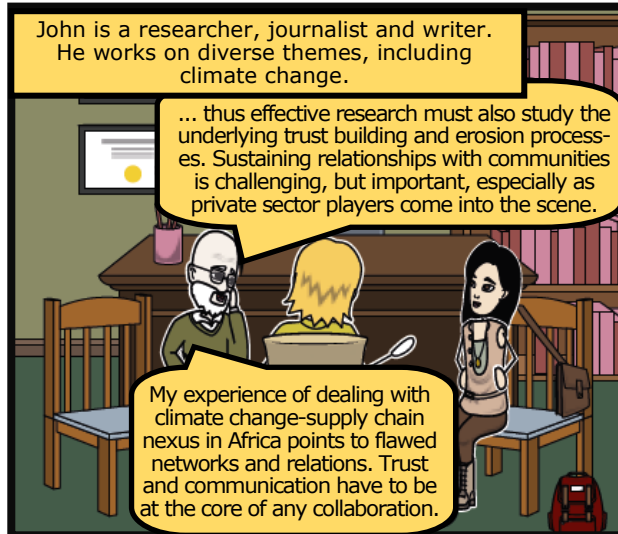


John Magrath, Programme Researcher

John is a researcher, journalist and writer. He works on diverse themes, including climate change.

... thus effective research must also study the underlying trust building and erosion processes. Sustaining relationships with communities is challenging, but important, especially as private sector players come into the scene.

My experience of dealing with climate change-supply chain nexus in Africa points to flawed networks and relations. Trust and communication have to be at the core of any collaboration.

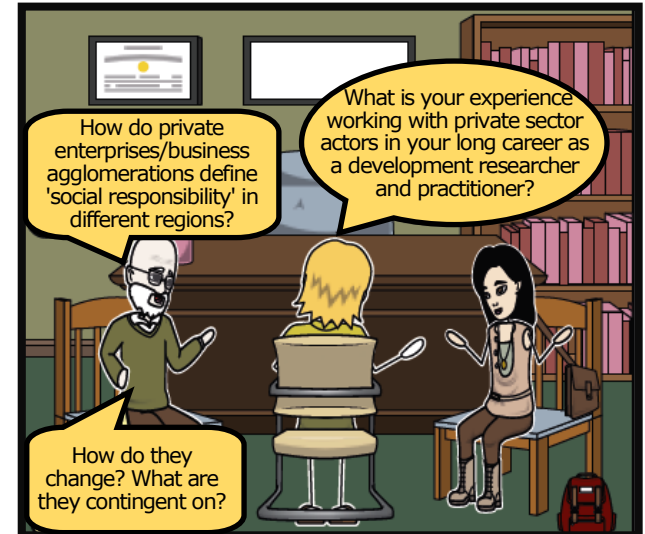


Is CSR an ideal approach?

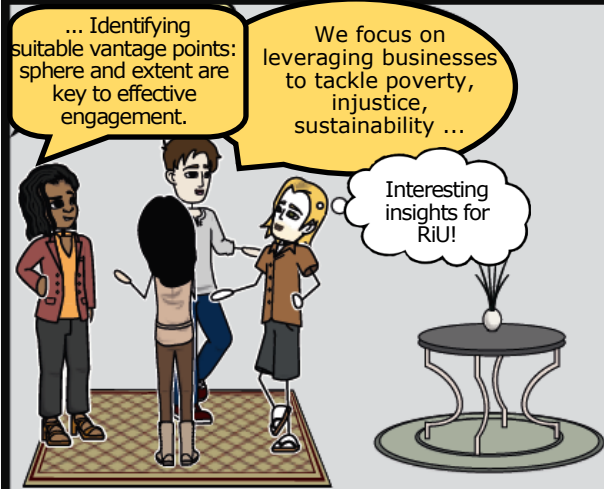
How do private enterprises/business agglomerations define 'social responsibility' in different regions?

What is your experience working with private sector actors in your long career as a development researcher and practitioner?

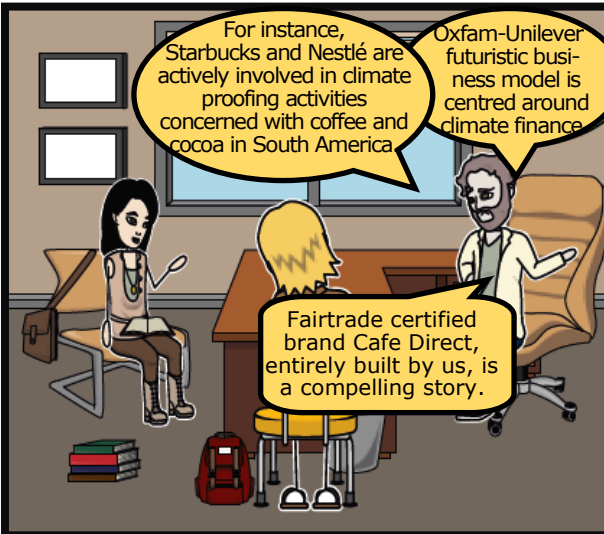
How do they change? What are they contingent on?



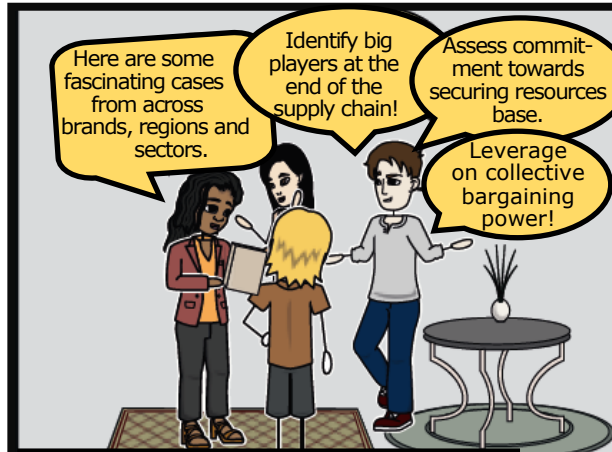
Erinch Sahan (Private Sector Team) and Ruth Mhlanga (Policy Advisor)



Climate change is a huge concern

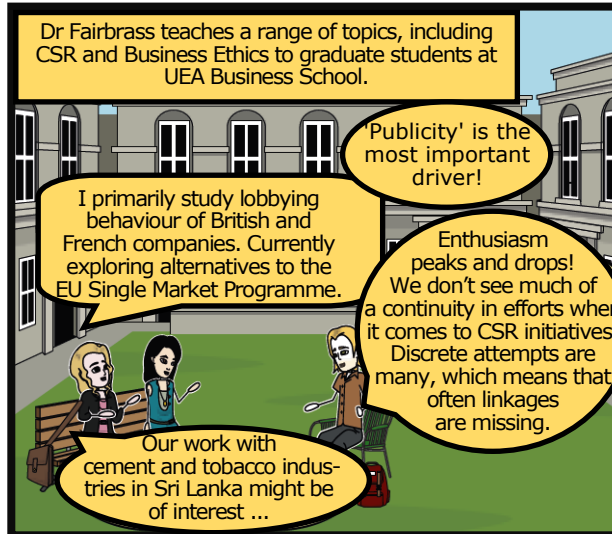


Real stories of change Behind the Brands Campaign!

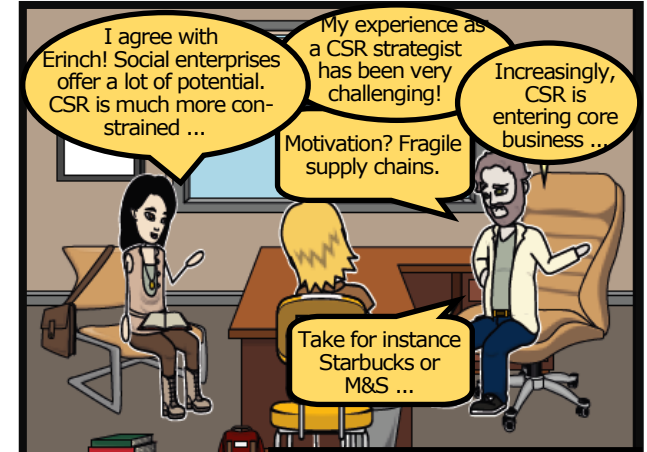


Unilever, Body Shop, M&S, Nestlé are some of the giants that exhibit Oxfam's sustained efforts ...

Dr Jenny Fairbrass Norwich Business School

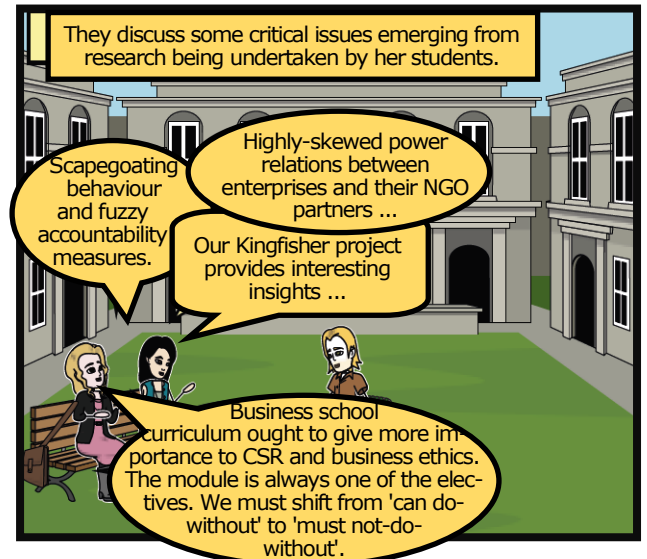


Wolfgang Weinmann Private Sector Team

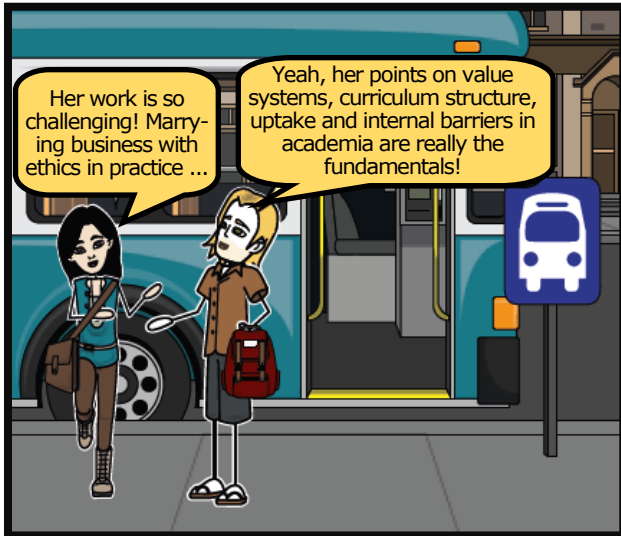


The bottom line is: money – or, the business case – drives private sector efforts around development.

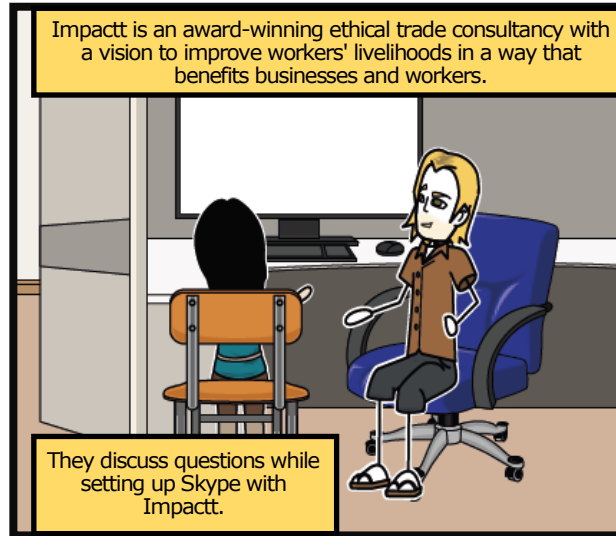
Dr Jenny Fairbrass Norwich Business School



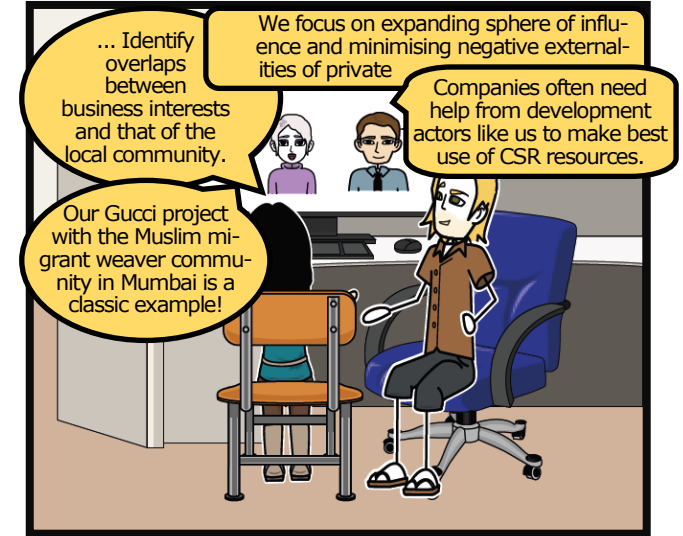
On their way back



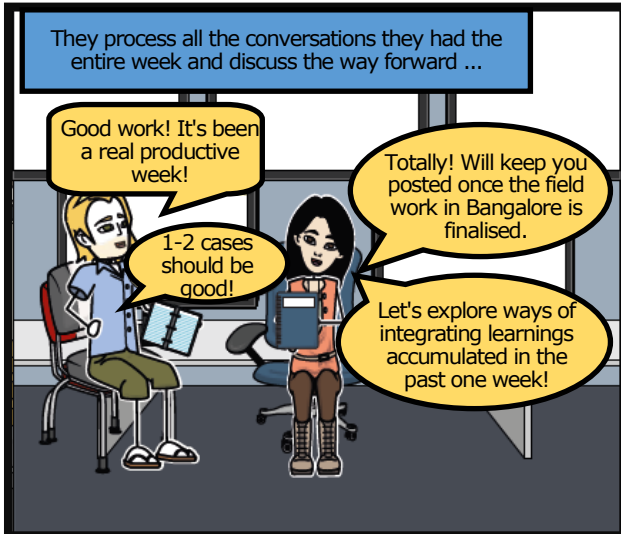
Impactt Limited, London



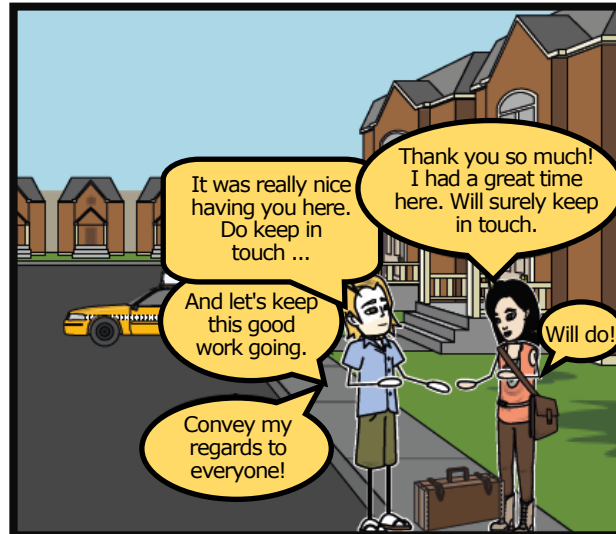
Finding the middle ground



Wrapping up



Goodbye



Like every journey that ends ...

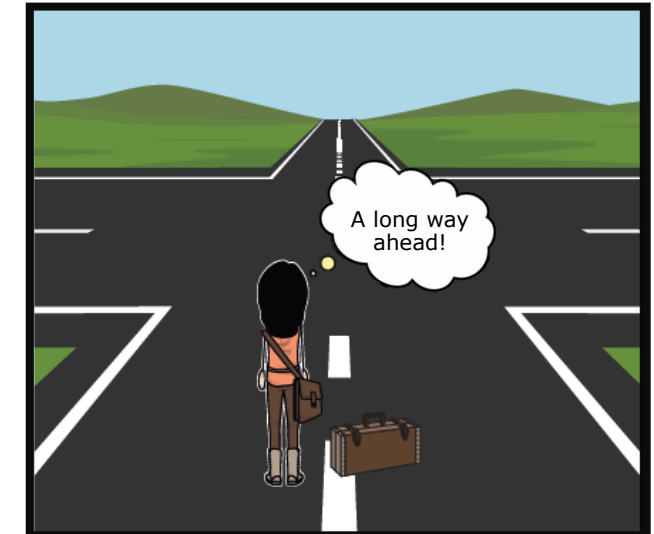




Photo: Ritwika Basu

ABOUT ASSAR

ASSAR uses insights from multiple-scale, interdisciplinary work to improve the understanding of the barriers, enablers and limits to effective, sustained and widespread climate change adaptation out to the 2030s. Working in seven countries in Africa and South Asia, ASSAR's regional teams research socio-ecological dynamics relating to livelihood transitions, and the access, use and management of land and water. One of four consortia under the Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia (CARIAA), ASSAR generates new knowledge of climate change hotspots to influence policy and practice and to change the way researchers and practitioners interact.

For more information: ASSAR - www.assar.uct.ac.za or email Ritwika Basu - basu@iihs.ac.in

iihs

INDIAN INSTITUTE FOR
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS



This work was carried out under the Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia (CARIAA), with financial support from the UK Government's Department for International Development (DfID) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. The views expressed in this work are those of the creators and do not necessarily represent those of DfID and IDRC or its Board of Governors.

Creative Commons License

This brief is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. Articles appearing in this publication may be freely quoted and reproduced provided that i) the source is acknowledged, ii) the material is not used for commercial purposes and iii) any adaptations of the material are distributed under the same license. © 2016 International Development Research Centre

Photos: Ritwika Basu © Photographers Editing and layout: Birgit Ottermann

