

Forecasting Societies Adaptive Capacities to Climate Change

Reporting

Project information

FUTURESOC

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Closed project

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**INTERNATIONALES INSTITUT FUER
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Final Report Summary - FUTURESOC (Forecasting Societies Adaptive Capacities to Climate Change)

This ambitious project entitled "Forecasting societies' adaptive capacities to climate change" aimed at bringing the powerful methods of multi-dimensional demographic modelling to the use of projecting social change over decades into the future which is necessary in order to understand what kinds of societies will be confronted with the likely changing future climate conditions. It has a specific focus on the empowering effect of education through assessing the vulnerability reducing effect in empirical studies of past natural disasters and in projecting national level trends in age- and sex-specific educational attainment distributions according to different scenarios. The project was structured into three main components which all resulted in significant publications:

- (1) Empirical assessments of the importance of education in reducing disaster vulnerability as compared to other protective factors. This has resulted in twelve case studies published in refereed journals, mostly as part of the special issue of *Ecology and Society* cited above. A summary article on "The key to advancing adaptive capacity to climate change" is currently (Oct 2014) in the final stages of review with *Science* awaiting a final editorial decision.
- (2) Advancing a theory of how socioeconomic change along cohort lines can be used to make forecasts on likely future social change and adaptive capacity for decades into the future. This new theory was published in *Population and Development Review* in 2012 under the title "Demographic Metabolism: A predictive theory of socioeconomic change".
- (3) The dominating part of the project was the production of a comprehensive synthesis of the state of knowledge about the drivers of future fertility, mortality, migration, and education and its translation into scenario projections by age, sex and level of education for all countries of the world to 2100. More than 550 international experts contributed to this through an online questionnaire or participation in expert meetings on five continents. The resulting volume (with over 60 contributing authors) was recently published by Oxford University Press under the title "World Population and Human Capital in the 21st Century". It has 1056 pages with tables for each country.

First comments on the book state:

"This is a path-breaking book which signals the ever-increasing importance of education to demography, economics and the delivery of

equal opportunities and fair outcomes.” The Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP, UN Special Envoy for Global Education

“This monumental, pioneering volume proselytizes for a new trinity of fundamentals of demography: age, sex, and education. If this book succeeds in its mission, as I hope it will, the future will look different, not only for the science of demography, but also for all people's lives.”

Professor Joel E. Cohen, The Rockefeller University and Columbia University, New York

“This is a valuable guide to data, analysis, and expert opinion bearing on the world's demographic future. Particularly instructive is the consistent focus on the transformative role of educational progress.” Professor Samuel H. Preston, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

“This book on human numbers and the quality of lives will deservedly become our first port of call whenever we seek to understand our past and our possible futures. It is simply a monumental piece of work.” Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

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