

Elizabeth Dean Hermann, PhD, FAAR

Professor of Urbanism and Landscape Architecture
Rhode Island School of Design
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Elizabeth Hermann is a designer and cultural historian whose research, international community development and design practice, and teaching fall into three categories: the cultural and environmental interconnectivity of cities; coastal communities, climate impacts, and ecosystem-based adaptation design strategies; and issues pertaining to the livelihoods, resilience, and well-being of economically disadvantaged populations and post-conflict societies. For the past 30 years, her research and practice have been centered in South Asia and the coastal cities of the Bay of Bengal region, where rapid urbanization, conflict, environment-driven displacement, and competing land interests are compounded by climate change impacts.

Hermann's background is in biology/botany, design and development, and history. She received her MLA from Cornell's College of Architecture, Art and Planning, and her PhD from Harvard, where she focused on urban history and pandemic disease in the pre-modern Muslim world. In addition to RISD, she has taught at MIT, Harvard, Brown, and Washington University in St Louis. She has been a Social Innovator-in-Residence and a visiting scholar in Babson College's Social Innovation Lab and Entrepreneurship Program; a SPURS Fellow in Urban Studies and Planning at MIT; a senior Fulbright Fellow in Sri Lanka; a Professional Fellow in Economic Empowerment with the US State Department, and is a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome.

ACADEMIC

1994 - Present

Rhode Island School of Design

Full Professor w/tenure 'critical review' (since 2004)

Chair, Faculty Steering Committee (2019-2020)

Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture (1994-2004)

Department Head, Landscape Architecture (1998-99; 2002-03? C. Searle's sabbatical coverage; 2025-26 Jul-Feb Barthmaier-Payne sabbatical coverage)

Courses Taught (selection only)

- Design Principles (Architecture and Landscape Architecture)
- Urban Ecologies (Architecture, final core studio)
- Urban Systems (Landscape Architecture, final core studio)
- Advanced Elective Studios (Landscape Architecture)
- Urban Contexts (Landscape Architecture, seminar)
- Constructed Landscapes (Landscape Architecture)
- Green Urbanism (Architecture/Liberal Arts seminar)

- Architecture of the Muslim World (Architecture, history seminar)
- History of Science in the Muslim World (Liberal Arts)
- History of Landscape Architecture (Landscape Architecture)
- Interior Architecture core studio (Interior Architecture)
- Aging and Health (care) seminar and workshop (Industrial Design)
- Design for Development (Graduate Studies seminar/studio)
- Thesis (Landscape Architecture, Architecture)
- Research/Theory/Design (Landscape Architecture)
- Representation (Landscape Architecture)
- Numerous interdisciplinary travel courses to India, Sri Lanka, Mexico, Greece, Turkey, Italy, and Costa Rica

Coordinator, Nature/Culture/Sustainability Studies Concentration (2018-22)

- Undergraduate students' individual disciplinary path coupled with a study of sustainable design, environmental social sciences, environmental humanities, social and environmental justice, climate change, and emerging technologies.

Founder/Director, DESINE Lab @ RISD (formerly ISUS/Institute for Sustainable Urban Societies, 1998-2016)

- Applied research lab founded by faculty, students, and alumni at RISD and Brown University, and partnering with environmentally-vulnerable, under-resourced, post-disaster, and post-conflict communities around the world to create strategic impact-driven design-based and educational infrastructure.

Committee Service (1994-Present)

- Admissions Committee (undergrad and grad);
- President's Advisory Board on Community Engagement
- Faculty Steering Committee (Chair)
- Committee on Faculty Appointments
- Research Committee
- Instruction Committee
- Global Programs Committee (Co-Chair)
- Library Committee
- Search Committees: Director of International Programs, Faculty in Architecture; Interior Architecture; Industrial Design; Landscape Architecture); Dean of Architecture and Design

2006-ongoing

Brown University

Affiliated Faculty, South Asian Studies (2016 on)

Affiliated Faculty, Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies (2016- on)

Lecturer, BIARI Institute

Watson Institute for International Studies

- *Integrating Community Perspectives and Gender into Post-Disaster Reconstruction*, Philippines (2018)
- *Ethical Issues at the Intersection of Human Security and Humanitarian Assistance* (2014)
- *Engineering as Design: The Role of Water Infrastructure in Rethinking the South Asian City* (2013)

Research Faculty, Watson International Scholars of the Environment (WISE)
Watson Institute for International Studies (2005-2009)

2015; 1999 **Massachusetts Institute of Technology**
Aga Khan Visiting Professor (2015), Department of Architecture
Visiting Associate Professor (1999), Department of Architecture

1994-1998 **Harvard University**
Adjunct Associate Professor, Graduate School of Design

- Landscape Architecture Design and History
- Urban Design Studio
- Urban History

EDUCATION

1999 **Harvard University**
Ph.D. in Islamic Urban History
Interdisciplinary work between the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, History of Science (medicine), and Middle Eastern Studies.

Dissertation on the Black Death and the Muslim World – contagion theories and changes to the urban built environment driven by medical, Islamic doctrinal, and political responses to pandemic disease and associated environmental upheaval.

Committee: Mirka Beneš, Gülru Necipoğlu, Jerrilynn Dodds

1983 **Cornell University**
Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA)
College of Architecture, Art & Planning

1977 **University of Vermont**
Bachelor of Science (BS)
Botany/Biology and Environmental Science

FELLOWSHIPS AWARDS & HONORS

2017-2018 **Senior Fulbright Scholar** (Sri Lanka)

Hosted by Swami Vipulananda Institute for Aesthetic Studies (SVIAS), Eastern University. Research on community-driven post-conflict reconstruction and development, creativity and conflict, and the preservation of cultural identity.

- 2014-2016 **Research Fellow, Collaborative for Inclusive Urbanism**, University of Oregon
- 2014 **Honorable Mention**, Colombian Diaspora Architecture and Design Awards (SCANY/PAD) – WE’VE Place Plaza, DESINE Lab community collaboration in Central Falls, RI.
- 2013 **Professional Fellow**, US State Department
Economic Empowerment Exchange Program (w/Colombia)
- 2011-12 **Social Innovator in Residence**, Social Innovation Lab, Babson College
Focus on women’s empowerment initiatives in underserved communities in the United States and South Asia
- 2010-11 **Visiting Scholar**, Blank Center for Entrepreneurship, Babson College
Focus on resilience within organizational structures and cooperative business models in South Asia and how these can be scaled, expanded, and diversified as part of a combined strategy aimed at social and economic empowerment
- 2004-05 **Visiting Scholar**, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University
Global Environment Program – focus on megacities of the Bengal Delta, with particular focus on rapid urban growth, urban poverty, and the social and environmental implications of short and long-term climate change.
- 2002-03 **SPURS Fellow**, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Urban and regional studies focusing on the intersection of poverty, land-use, and urban flooding in Dhaka, Bangladesh
- 1999 **H.W.S. Cleveland Scholar**, College of Design, University of Minnesota
- 1995-96 **Junior Fellow (dissertation completion)**, Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC, (Harvard University)
- 1986-87 **Rome Prize in Landscape Architecture, American Academy In Rome**
Visual and spatial interpretations of the landscapes, real and implied, in *La Divina Commedia* by Dante Alighieri

GRANTS

- 2024 **RISD Professional Development Grant**
Support for field research in Sri Lanka documenting the cultures, ethnicities, and land use practices along a 900-km southeast-to-northwest transect across the island nation.
\$5000

- 2022 **RISD Professional Development Grant**
Support for ongoing research on climate impacts and ecosystem-based adaptation strategies in Bay of Bengal cities: Colombo, Dhaka, Kolkata, Chennai and Yangon. (Grant could not be utilized due to economic collapse in Sri Lanka, and ongoing political unrest in the country)
\$7100
- 2021 **Curriculum Development Grant, American Institute of Sri Lankan Studies/AISLS**
Funding to create an online teaching module on “Coastal Cities, Wetlands and Climate Change: Risk and Resilience in Sri Lanka’s Capital City Colombo.” (w/ Jessica Leete, Devon Miller, and Sathya Munagamage)
\$1000
- 2021 **Project Grant, RI Council for the Humanities**
Support for the Museum of Silenced Histories' visual storytelling initiative and exhibition. Support for the Museum of Silenced Histories' visual storytelling initiative and exhibition. (w/ Susan Gorelick, through CC4ES)
\$1525
- 2017 **RISD Faculty Development Grant**
Support for research in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka studying the activities of women impacted by three decades of conflict), as well as the emergence of creativity, entrepreneurial activities, and reconfigurations of social support networks.
\$2,225
- 2015 **RISD Bridge Grant**
To continue work developing pedagogical objectives, curriculum, and physical plans for a new Centre for Integrated Design and Development in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka (in partnership with the American Mission in Ceylon, establ. 1815) that addresses immediate and long-term needs of communities impacted by three decades of civil war.
\$7500
- 2014 **RISD Academic Enrichment and Kyobo Fund Grant**
Support for developing and teaching a two-term interdisciplinary course – Synergies of Intention: Behavioral Change, Health, Rights & Economics, focusing on local and global health care delivery systems. (w/ Claudia Rebola and Daniel Feldman)
\$25,000
- 2011 **RISD Faculty Development Grant**
Support for documentation of community-based entrepreneurship in India and Bangladesh.
\$3100

- 2008 **RISD Kyobo Fund Grant**
Support for collaborative teaching between Liberal Arts, Landscape Architecture, and Architecture (w/Jonathan Highfield and Nick DePace) focusing on water issues and community development in West Bengal.
\$20,000
- 2006 **RISD Kyobo Fund Grant**
Support for new course offering in the Division of Graduate Studies: Design for Development, focusing on the role artists and designers can play in addressing social and economic development issues in still-developing regions of the world.
\$5000
- 2006 **RISD Faculty Development Grant**
Support for on-site mapping of urban settlement patterns along major rivers of the Bengal Delta.
\$3500
- 2003 **RISD Faculty Development Grant**
Support for the documentation of a severe urban flooding event in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
\$3000
- 1997 **RISD Faculty Development Grant**
Support for research on the modern house in New England.
\$1500
- 1993 **Dissertation Research Grant**
Real Colegio Complutense Universidad de Madrid
\$2500
- 1993 **Dissertation Research Grant**
Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, Harvard and MIT
\$6000

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

- 2016-on **Founder/Director, TAASI East/Transformative Arts, Activism and Social Impact** (international non-profit based in Providence, RI and Sri Lanka)
- Focus areas:*
- Centre for Environment & Design**, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka
TAASI East's CE&D was founded as a post-graduate research and learning institution in Batticaloa, Eastern Province, Sri Lanka. It was closed in March 2019 due to local unrest following the ISUS-inspired Easter terrorist bombings across the island. The Centre was founded in response to three main concerns: chronic underemployment and unemployment of university graduates in the country; the lack of local expertise in environmental planning and design; and

the sustainable development needs in the Eastern Province – an area with high poverty rates, lack of opportunity, and general under-development of inland areas. TE/CE&D was planned in affiliation with local universities, and was to operate on four levels: a lab of environment and design research; a post-graduate project-based educational institution; a center of innovation; and as a business incubator for the launching of environmental and social design practices that commit to the training and employment of the most vulnerable members of the region as a core component of their business strategies.

Woven Wisdom/Rooted Lives: Sustainable Handloom Village

Eastern Province, Sri Lanka

A speculative project run during the height of COVID as a year-long “pop-up” planning and design office where faculty and students from RISD, Brown University, and Sri Lanka developed an off-the-grid sustainable village for families living in poverty in the country’s underdeveloped Eastern Province dry zone. Conceived as a model of sustainable development and regenerative land use, the village was developed to support the region’s low-income war-impacted population by creating a cooperative residential settlement; a place of healing and a refuge for vulnerable members of the population – in particular women and children; a resource and training center for handloom textile production as well as sustainable building practices, regenerative farming, water management practices, and low-tech energy systems; a textile production facility; and a place fostering community cooperation in living, governance, and business practices.

Visual Storytelling Project, Sri Lanka

As part of TAASI East’s (and DESINE Lab’s) work with local NGOs and community organizations, trauma-informed visual storytelling workshops are run to give vulnerable communities opportunities to share memories, envision hopeful futures, and heal. An evolving process keeps stories and their translations framed by individual’s and communities’ relationship to the land and to the tending of nature and community.

Negotiated Terrain: Climate Change, Urbanization & Environment

Colombo, Sri Lanka

Part of a larger research effort focused on coastal cities of the Eastern Indian Ocean/Bay of Bengal region. The Colombo study focuses on urban hydrological infrastructure; urbanization processes and settlement patterns; space and resource inequities, and urban vulnerabilities and opportunities in the context of the climate crisis.

PieceWork / PeaceWork

A collection of writings, digital paintings, and textile art focused on the trauma and healing of Sri Lanka’s various religious and ethnic communities and the lands they occupy following years of civil conflict and environmental disaster.

- 2025-2028 **Planning Board Member, Barrington, RI**
- 2025-on **Board Member, Marigold Creation** (Center for Inclusive Education, Creative Empowerment, Ecological Awareness, and Community Collaboration)
Colombo, Sri Lanka
- 2021-on **Founding Board Member, Museum of Silenced Histories**, Providence, RI
A physical and digital place of storytelling, healing, and reconciliation for those whose stories have been silenced in the past. It is an initiative of the Coalition Center for Environmental Sustainability (CC4ES), a 501 (c)(3) non-profit grassroots organization for building sustainable and resilient communities with environmental, social, and economic justice and equity.
- 2021-on **Board Member, Map-Collective Foundation**
A research and conservation-focused nonprofit focused on climate change and mapping the ongoing needs of the planet and humanity through the lenses of design, academia, and health.
- 2008–2016 **Founder/Director, DESINE-Lab@RISD**
Applied research lab working with environmentally-vulnerable, under-resourced, post-disaster, and post-conflict communities in Southern New England and the Global South to create strategic impact-driven design-based strategies and educational infrastructure (w/ Silvia Acosta and Daniel Feldman).

focus areas:

Narrative Flows, Kolkata, India

Applied research undertaken by DESINE Lab (work begun under former name ISUS) focusing on urbanization, poverty, environmental infrastructure, and urban vulnerabilities. (in connection with Kyobo Grant funded RISD courses with Nick DePace and Jonathan Highfield)

Northern Visions Sri Lanka /NVSL, Kilinochchi, Sri Lanka

A reconstruction plan and establishment of a Women's Development Centre for the Mahadeva Achchirama organization. Carried out in collaboration with local partners and NGOs, this was a multi-dimensional and multi-scalar effort to provide vision, support, and essential planning and action-taking tools for the physical rebuilding process and capacity building and livelihood development efforts within war-impacted Kilinochchi.

Banyan Grove, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

A design-build effort for St. John's Boys Home of the Church of the American Ceylon Mission (CACM) involving students from the Rhode Island School of Design. Adaptive re-use and reconstruction of buildings and vacant neglected land that created a new space for community gathering, study, performance, recreation, and cultivation. The built effort was in collaboration with faculty and students of the St. John's Vocational Training Center.

St. John's Design Centre, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka

The SJDC of the Church of the American Ceylon Mission (CACM) aimed to complement the region's larger ongoing social and economic recovery efforts by offering educational and training programs in creativity and innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving, and entrepreneurship. The target audience was local 'at-risk' communities, including high school dropouts, vocational training school graduates, artisan communities, and economically and socially vulnerable women. Funding issues put this effort on hold until it could be rolled into the new community college and college prep program founded by CACM.

Cultural/Environmental Study of Coastal Cities of the Bay of Bengal Region

Research on the role landscape, water systems, and climate have played in the histories, settlement patterns, economies, and cultural identities of the cities surrounding the Bay of Bengal and the eastern Indian Ocean.

Landscape, Identity, and Cultural Narrative in Sri Lanka

On-going research project about the historical significance of landscape and water in the lives of Sri Lanka's many diverse communities.

Conflict and Creativity in Wartime Sri Lanka

A study of human resilience, adaptability, the reparation of disimagination, and the construction of meaning in times of uncertainty and extreme violence.

Rebuilding the Post-Industrial City, Central Falls, RI

A three-year involvement with the City of Central Falls, the Office of Planning, and the city's citizens focused on re-imagining one of Rhode Island's most economically-stressed and under-resourced cities. Central Falls was the first city in the nation to declare bankruptcy in the 2008 recession. It is the state's most dense urban area and is primarily populated with Colombian immigrants who arrived for textile jobs, which disappeared from the region almost as soon as the newcomers arrived. The collaboration with the city was initiated by the then Mayor James Diossa. It involved creating the city's first physical master plan; design-build efforts in collaboration with residents to create much-needed public open space; development plans for an abandoned mill and factory sites that sought to build collaborations between the state, local universities, industry, and the medical institutions; and a business incubator and training center supported and staffed by the city, local universities, and local expertise.

2010-11

Co-Founder/Co-Director, Tamassee Institute (Tamassee, South Carolina)

Collaboration between faculty at RISD and Babson, Tamassee DAR School, Tri-County Technical College, and local communities in the rural Appalachian region of South Carolina to foster community-led development and the growth of creative economies (now dissolved as the local partner underwent a change of leadership and objectives).

1998-2008 **Co-Founder and Director, Institute for Sustainable Urban Societies/(ISUS)**
(in affiliation with RISD)
International nonprofit research, education, design, and advocacy alliance
focusing on the intersection of urban poverty, environment, and community-led
development.

focus areas:

Sarasvati Environment + Design Education Initiative

Research effort with universities in Bangladesh and India addressing the future
of South Asia's urban coastal cities in light of population increase,
environmental degradation, and sea-level rise.

Traditional Water Management Systems of India

Research on water harvesting, distribution, and flood management systems

Urban Flooding and Poverty in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Research on settlement trends and flooding issues in the rapidly developing
deltaic capital city.

2005 **Consultant, Aga Khan Development Network/IMARA**, Toronto, Canada
Planning process for the new Islamic Cultural Center and Islamic Art Museum

2003-05 **Senior Advisor for Planning, Design, and Curriculum Development,
Asian University for Women Support Foundation**, NYC/Bangladesh
New university founded in Chittagong, Bangladesh to serve women from
disadvantaged or conservative backgrounds in South, West, and Southeast
Asia. The initiative, led by Kamal Ahmad, grew out of the UNESCO/World Bank
Task Force for Higher Education in the Developing World.

1985-91 **Associate, Designer, and Project Manager, Sasaki Associates**, Watertown, MA
Landscape architecture and urban design

1983-84 **Designer, Loomis Bolton Landscape Architects and Planners**,
St Louis, Missouri

**CONFERENCE &
SYMPOSIA**
(organized)

2019 **Race and the Environment Symposium** (Providence, RI)
Sponsored by the Nature/Culture/Sustainability Studies program and
Department of Landscape Architecture at RISD. Offered a nuanced view of the
nature-culture discourse while reframing generalizing assumptions about
human-nature relationship that persist within Western design professions, the
environmental movement, and histories and theories of landscape and
environmental placemaking.

- 2006 **Urban Waters/Alternative Futures Symposium and Workshop**, New Orleans
Co-sponsored by Brown's Watson Institute, the Department of Landscape Architecture at RISD, 2006 and ISUS. Focus on the impact of climate change on coastal and deltaic cities with case studies from Dhaka, Bangladesh and New Orleans, Louisiana. (Canceled last minute due to Hurricane Katrina)
- 2005 **Sustainable Solutions for Urban Waters and Wastelands**, Dhaka Bangladesh
Co-sponsored by ISUS, Presidency University Dhaka, and Interface Bangla Ltd. Conference and workshops focusing on Dhaka's environmental and social crises brought on by rapid unplanned urban growth.
- 2004 **Year/s of Water/s: Water, Life, and Design In South Asia**, Providence, RI
Sponsored by ISUS and the Department of Landscape Architecture, RISD.
- 1993 **Women-Land-Design Symposium**, Radcliffe College, Harvard University
Co-Organizer with Eleanor M. McPeck.

**INVITED
LECTURES**
(selection)

- 2024 ***Women's Solidarity, Storytelling, and Restorative Actions: Notes from the Field in South Asia***
Global Fellows in Courage (in partnership with the Brown University Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies (CHRHs))
Speaker
- 2024 ***DESINE-Lab to TAASI East: Navigating Purpose, Patience, and Persistence***
NOMAS (National Organization of Minority Architects), Department of Architecture, RISD
Speaker
- 2021 ***Urbanisation, Cities, and Future Planning through Design***
World Humanitarian Forum (London/Virtual)
Speaker/Panelist
- 2020 ***City and Risk: Achievements and Opportunities***
INHAF Habitat Forum (India/virtual)
Speaker/Panelist
- 2020 ***Future of Urban Design: A Conversation about Resilience and Repair***
Institute of Urban Designers India/IUDI (India/virtual)
Speaker/Discussant
- 2019 ***Global Dialogues: The Repair of Place***
Rhode Island School of Design Museum
Discussant, w/ Mihir Bhatt, Director of All-India Disaster Mitigation Institute

- 2018 ***Intangibility and The Politics of Resistance***
SVIAS Eastern University International Conference: Importance of Mainstreaming Local Knowledge Systems and Intangible Cultural Heritages, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka
Keynote Speaker
- 2017 ***The Arts in Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding***
Archive of Contemporary Art, Architecture & Design, Jaffna, Sri Lanka
Speaker
- 2017 ***The Arts in Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding***
US-Sri Lanka Fulbright Commission, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Speaker
- 2017 ***The Human Figure in Islamic Art***
Swami Vipulananda Institute, Eastern University, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka
Speaker
- 2017 ***Housing, Community and Place: Tapping into the Silver Economy***
Co-sponsored by Partnership for Greater Providence and Social Enterprise Greenhouse, Providence, RI
Panel Moderator
- 2016 ***Rethinking Urbanism in Light of Climate Change, Cultural Diversity, and Recent Conflict in a Sri Lankan City***
Speaker as part Cities, Society and Culture side event, UNHABITAT 3, Quito, Ecuador, organized by the Centre for the Built Environment, Kolkata, India.
(Cancelled last minute due to CBE not being able to attend)
Speaker
- 2016 ***Teaching Sustainability***
Global Product Sustainability Workshop co-sponsored by University of Rhode Island and Technische Universität Braunschweig, Kingstown, RI
Speaker and Session Chair
- 2016 ***DESINE-Lab and Social Entrepreneurship in a Global Context***
United States Institute for Student Leaders on Social Entrepreneurship, US State Department and the University of Connecticut, Global Affairs, Storrs, CT
Speaker
- 2016 ***Faith and Memory: Women's Interfaith Stories and the Building of a Memory Archive in Post-Civil War Sri Lanka***
Gender, Faith and Spirituality Symposium, Bridge Center, Johnson and Wales University, Providence, RI
Speaker

- 2016 ***Design, Democracy, and Work***
Critical Design/Critical Futures II: Rethinking Sustainable Design Futuring,
co-sponsored by Rhode Island School of Design and Brown University
Panelist
- 2015 ***Reconstruction in Post-Conflict Sri Lanka***
Conference on Complex Water Challenges, Massachusetts Institute of
Technology, Cambridge, MA
Speaker
- 2015 ***Speculative Design Futures: Pedagogy Theory + Praxis***
Critical Design/Critical Futures Symposium, co-sponsored by Rhode Island
School of Design and Brown University
Panelist
- 2014 ***Realignment: DESINE-Lab In Central Falls***
Symposium on Micro-Enterprise, Urban Production and the Architecture of
Inclusion, co-sponsored by University of Oregon and Mercy Corps NW
Portland, Oregon
Speaker
- 2014 ***Design Thinking***
Social Enterprise Economic Ecosystem Development (SEED) Conference,
Brown University, Providence, RI
Panel Moderator
- 2014 ***Community-Focused Development in Rhode Island***
Southern New England American Planning Association (SNEAPA)
DESINE-Lab master planning and design in Central Falls, RI
Panelist and Exhibitor
- 2014 ***Terrains of Engagement: Intentionality and Impact***
Better World x Design Conference, co-sponsored by Brown University and
Rhode Island School of Design
Panelist
- 2013 ***Restoration of the Post-Conflict City: Triage vs Planning***
International Symposium on Cities Under Restoration, Centre for the Built
Environment, Kolkata, India
(Airline malfunction en route prevented our participation)
Keynote Speaker and Workshop Co-Coordinator (w/Daniel Feldman)
- 2013 ***Impact Assessment***
Better World x Design Conference, co-sponsored by Brown University and
Rhode Island School of Design
Panel Moderator

- 2013 ***Take it to the Limit: Engaging the South Asian City***
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Bogotá, Colombia
Speaker
- 2013 ***Resiliency and Growth in the Megacities of the Delta***
International Symposium Cities under Change, Centre for the Built Environment, Kolkata, India
Speaker
- 2013 ***Design Action/Social Innovation***
ABX Conference, Boston Society of Architects, Boston, MA
Panelist
- 2012 ***Livelihood Development and Micro Supply Chains***
Sustainatopia Conference, Miami, Florida
Panelist with Made by Survivors (MBS)
- 2011 ***Addressing Issues of Social and Environmental Injustice through Entrepreneurship and Design***
Brown University Entrepreneurship Forum, Providence, RI
Speaker
- 2011 ***Sustainability & Resilience: Megacities of Bengal***
Antioch University New England, Department of Environmental Studies
Keene, NH
Speaker
- 2010 ***Sustainability & Resilience at the Human-Environment Interface***
Disaster Resilient Design Conference, National Academies of Science
Washington, DC
Speaker/Panelist
- 2010 ***Urbanization, Poverty, and Land-Use in the Megacities of South Asia***
Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA
Speaker
- 2009 ***Community-Driven Development in Kalighat***
US Consulate, Kolkata, India
Presentation of graduate student research and development strategies.
Speaker
- 2009 ***RISD Research on Water Issues in South Asia***
International Symposium on Water and the City, sponsored by Centre for the Built Environment and the Academy of Fine Arts, Kolkata, India
Speaker

- 2006 ***Environmental Change and Deltaic Cities***
Water Resources Conference, Center for Macro Projects and Diplomacy,
Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI
Speaker
- 2005 ***Women and the Urban Environment in Bangladesh***
Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Economic Development Conference: Political
State and the Workforce – Middle East, Africa, and South Asia, Gabelli School of
Business, Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI
Speaker
- 2005 ***Design for Change: The Asian University for Women in Bangladesh***
Aga Khan University Conference on Education in Developing Countries:
Muslim Contexts, London, UK
Speaker
- 2002 ***Water as Infrastructure: Sustainability in Dhaka, Bangladesh***
Landscapes of Water International Conference, Monopoli, Italy
Speaker

PUBLICATIONS

- 2025 ***Water, Urbanization, and Climate Change in Colombo, Sri Lanka***
in *Living with Water: Development and Urbanism in South Asia*,
Mahbubur Rahman, editor, Routledge
- In process ***Nature of Identity: Environment, Culture, and Narrative in Sri Lanka***
(to be completed 2026)
- In process ***Cities of Silt and Sand: Urbanization, Displacement and Environment in the
Bay of Bengal Region***
- In process ***Beyond Silence: The Role of Imagination and Creative Practice in Conflict
Resolution and Peacebuilding***
(Sri Lanka and Colombia)
- 2021 ***A View from the Design Community***
in *Accountability to Affected Populations in Times of Pandemic*,
southasiadisasasters.net, Issue No. 192 (Feb 2021), 16-17.
- 2021 ***Intersections / Environment, Culture & Resilient Societies in the
Bay Of Bengal Region: The Work of DESINE-Lab and TAASI East 1996-2021***
(unpublished)
- 2019 ***Making Space: Creativity and Resilience in Wartime Sri Lanka***
in v.1, publication of the Rhode Island School of Design (Spring 2019)

- 2015 ***Rebuilding the Post-Industrial City: Three Years of DESINE-Lab in Central Falls, RI***
(unpublished)
- 2010 ***Reconstructed Nature: The Making and Meaning of Landscape in Early Muslim Iraq***
in *Sustaining the Iraqi Marshlands: Restorative Redevelopment*, Robert L. France, ed., New York: Routledge (was to be published in 2006, later absorbed into *Restorative Redevelopment of Devastated Eco-Cultural Landscapes*, CRC Press, 2010)
- 2006 ***Women, Gender, and Urban Built Environments: South Asia***
in *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Culture*, Leiden: Brill
- 2002 ***The Environmental Movement and Environmental Policy-Making in Bangladesh***
SPURS, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- 2002 ***Integrated Approaches to Flood Management and Water Containment Systems (Dhaka, Bangladesh)***
In *Proceedings of Landscapes of Water International Conference*, Monopoli, Italy, 2002

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

- 2025 **Peacekeeping and International Conflict Resolution** (certificate), Peace Operations Training Institute
Taught by Professor Emeritus Tom Woodhouse, Adam Curle Chair in Conflict Resolution, University of Bradford UK
- Preventing Violence Against Women and Promoting Gender Equality in Peace Operations** (certificate), Peace Operations Training Institute
Taught by Jennifer Wittwer, international consultant on gender and women, peace, and security, retired from Australian Defence Force; and Megan Bastick, Gender and Security Division of DCAF-Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
- 2024-25 **Trauma-Informed Counseling and Practice** (certificate), Mobius Executive Leadership/AIS
Year-long program (hybrid) focused on both my work with individual and collective trauma in marginalized, post-disaster, and post-conflict communities.

LANGUAGES

Spanish (basic reading/writing proficiency); Italian and French (basic reading); Classical Arabic (reading - rusty); German (rudimentary); Tamil (beginning)