

## **Reparations: A Brief Submitted to the Clear-Eyed Equity Workshop**

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International justice debates are likely to become even more potent because the sharpest injustice – the fact that those who have done little to contribute to the problem are those facing the most dire climate impacts - is intensifying as we remain far from a 2C trajectory. Climate losses are almost certain to increase at exactly the point at which developed countries insisted on language to bound liability or compensation in the context of loss and damage. While this compromise was accepted by the COP, it is unclear how the international community will manage increased climate losses over time, including deep-seated claims about injustice in the face of these.

Reparations provide a potentially useful pathway for the global discussions because they are broader than monetary compensation and are ultimately focused on repairing relationships. They constitute explicit attention to those who are most harmed, and take multiple forms depending on the harm. Moreover, the wealth of experience with reparations is only starting to be interrogated from a climate perspective. Consolidation of this knowledge could inform political and pragmatic approaches to loss and damage.

This brief proposes a research program to integrate insights about reparations from multiple disciplines, explore lessons for their applicability to the climate context, and make this knowledge available to those interested in approaches to climate loss within and beyond the UNFCCC. Specifically three core disciplinary areas would be included.

First, initial work connecting experiences from (successful and unsuccessful) reparations for harms from ecological destruction to non-economic loss and damage frameworks <sup>1</sup> provides a useful starting point for examination.

Second, a project run by Climate Strategies modified the UN framework for reparations in peace-building for identifying possible climate reparations <sup>2</sup>. This tradition is useful to examine because of the breadth of reparations represented, including those that are non-financial and symbolic (i.e. including apologies or commemoration) in nature.

Finally, efforts to repair transnational relationships provide a broader perspective. Both past transnational reparation programs (e.g. by Germany towards Israel; by Iraq towards Kuwait) and current debates (e.g. calls for reparations for slavery in the Caribbean) provide insights in the unique challenges and strategies for transnational reparation.

Each of these currently disconnected bodies of research provide a wealth of insights about the design and implementation of reparation programs that build trust, repair relationships and result in concrete improvements in the lives of those most harmed. However, these have remained isolated from each other and are only starting to be applied to the climate context. This research program would attempt to consolidate hard-won lessons about repair in the face of great loss.

1. Morrissey, J. & Oliver-Smith, A. (2013) Perspectives on Non-Economic Loss and Damage. United Nations University. <http://loss-and-damage.net/download/7213.pdf>
2. Klinsky, S. (2016) Reparations: Lessons for the Climate Debate. Climate Strategies. <http://climatestrategies.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Brief-3-Reparations.pdf>