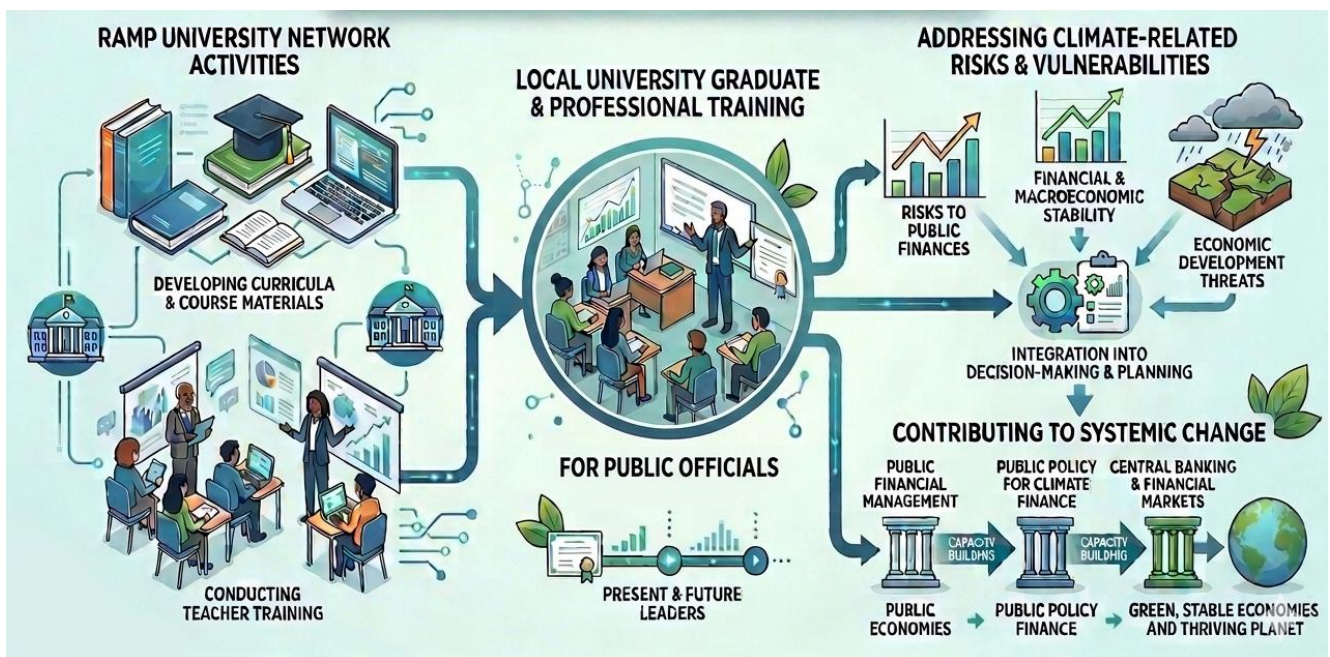


The RAMP University Network

Building local expertise to strengthen economic and fiscal resilience to climate change

This case study demonstrates how The RAMP University Network helps to build local capacity that empower universities in climate-vulnerable countries to train public officials to better understand climate challenges and acquire the technical knowledge to design effective policy responses to climate change.



1. Overview

Governments at the national, regional and municipal level need to better understand the challenges posed by climate change to the economy and public households. They also need to “climate-proof” public finances and make strategic decisions on how to best support businesses and households to adapt to climate change and support a transition to a more sustainable and resilient economy. The RAMP University Network is working through leading local universities to build local expertise to strengthen economic and fiscal resilience to climate change. Local universities are empowered to not only build expertise among the next generation of public officials, but they are also supported to lead capacity building for public officials. By embedding much needed skills, tools and expertise within local institutions, the RAMP approach supports long-term sustainability and reduces reliance on external technical assistance.

2. Context and Structural Challenge

Public policy plays a crucial role in addressing climate change. Not only do governments at the national, regional and municipal level need to mobilise resources for financing adaptation and mitigation. They also need to climate-proof public finances and help the economy strengthen its resilience against climate change. They also need to decide how to best allocate scarce resources for climate action. To do so, they need to have a thorough understanding of the challenges, how these can be addressed, and what the costs and benefits of different policy and investment choices are.

These challenges are particularly acute in many Commonwealth countries, where rapid economic development and urbanisation, high exposure to climate hazards, and constrained fiscal space intersect. Cities are often on the front line of climate impacts such as flooding, heat stress and infrastructure disruption, yet the financial and institutional systems needed to respond to these effectively are often underdeveloped. At the same time, governments at the national, regional and municipal level are under increasing pressure to integrate climate considerations into budgeting, investment planning and macroeconomic policy.

A key constraint is limited technical and analytical capacity. Public authorities lack the data, models and interdisciplinary skills needed to assess climate risks and evaluate policy and investment choices. Existing macroeconomic tools are often not well suited to capturing climate impacts, while institutional silos can limit coordination across government at all levels. This capacity gap constrains evidence-based decision-making and limits progress towards local and national climate commitments. Addressing it requires sustained investment in skills, tools and institutions that can support climate-informed policy over the long term.

3. Project Approach and Delivery Model

The Resilience and Adaptation Mainstreaming Program (RAMP) leverages leading universities, research institutes and international technical partners to build the capacity of governments in vulnerable countries to better manage climate change risks and build more resilient economies.¹ The focus of RAMP is on enhancing local capacities and local expertise. This is why RAMP partners with local universities. Through its University Network, which currently has 20 members in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean and keeps expanding, RAMP promotes multi-disciplinary academic teaching and research in areas important for strengthening economic and financial resilience to climate change. All member universities are committed to building capacities to carry out relevant high-quality teaching and research, not only to educate the next generations of leaders in their degree

¹ An example of our work can be found here: [SOAS Centre for Sustainable Finance Delivers Capacity Building Course for Caribbean Finance Ministries in collaboration with the Inter-American Development Bank and the University of the West Indies | SOAS](#)

programmes, but also to work with governments and other public authorities and support them through professional training.

The RAMP University Network develops curricula and course materials to enable universities in climate-vulnerable countries to offer high-quality graduate-level teaching and professional training. In parallel, RAMP supports member universities through research grants that help generate country-specific evidence and strengthen their role as strategic knowledge partners to ministries of finance and other public authorities. The combined efforts will enable future and current leaders to effectively address climate-related macro-financial risks and vulnerabilities that threaten public finances, financial and macroeconomic stability, and economic development. It will empower them to better address climate risks and vulnerabilities and integrate them into decision-making and planning. Through such capacity-building, the RAMP University Network contributes to systemic change in public financial management, public policy for climate finance, central banking and financial markets in climate-vulnerable countries.

One important area of focus is strengthening economic modelling capacity, where many existing tools are not well suited to assess climate risks and impacts. The RAMP University Network has introduced targeted teacher training and practitioner courses for government officials to support them in applying and adapting such tools to the specific local contexts. It is also developing new training on ecological macro modelling to enable more tailored scenario analysis.

RAMP is supported through a broad partnership model, working closely with local authorities as well as international partners and stakeholders, including the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, the Bretton Woods institutions, UNDP, and regional development banks. The RAMP University Network is managed by the Centre for Sustainable Finance at SOAS, University of London.

4. Insights and Lessons

A key strength of the RAMP University Network is its focus on locally anchored capacity building. By working through universities, the programme embeds skills, knowledge, and tools within local and national systems rather than relying on short-term external technical assistance. This approach has proven effective in building sustained expertise among both current and future public officials, particularly in ministries of finance, planning, regulatory agencies and other public bodies.

Another important lesson is the value of linking global tools to local contexts. Our training on macroeconomic models or public financial management and climate-sensitive budgeting demonstrate how international methodologies can be adapted to country-specific realities. This helps bridge the gap between global discourses on climate finance and practical policy application in climate-vulnerable countries.

However, there are also some challenges. RAMP member universities often face capacity constraints, including limited resources and faculty expertise, as well as competing institutional priorities. Building interdisciplinary programmes that combine economics, finance and policy can also be complex. Additionally, sustained engagement with government stakeholders requires time, trust, and alignment with policy cycles.

For Commonwealth countries, the RAMP model highlights the importance of investing in skills systems for urban finance and integrated planning, particularly where climate risks intersect with fiscal pressures. The approach aligns strongly with efforts to strengthen public financial management, climate budgeting, and evidence-based policymaking, contributing directly to more resilient and sustainable urbanisation pathways.

5. Key Takeaways

- Embedding climate and macro-financial skills in local universities enables long-term, scalable capacity for resilient urban finance systems.
- Partnerships between academia and governments strengthen evidence-based policymaking and climate-informed budgeting.
- Adapting global tools (e.g. macroeconomic models) to country contexts improves relevance and uptake in decision-making.
- The RAMP approach aligns with public financial management reforms and climate finance strategies, supporting implementation of national climate commitments.
- Supporting skills development and institutional capacity are critical enablers for integrated urban planning and sustainable investment.
- RAMP creates pathways for replication and scale-up across Commonwealth countries through network-based learning and shared curricula.

This Case Study was prepared by Prof. Ulrich Volz and Dr Harald Heubaum, SOAS, University of London, by way of contribution to the work of the CSCC Sustainable Urbanisation Expert Group, March 2026.



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