

# JESSICA MERCER

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## Skills Profile:

Jessica Mercer has over ten years of experience in the International Development sector where she has specialised in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). Prior to establishing 'Secure Futures' Jessica worked as a part-time Climate Change Adaptation Manager for Oxfam whilst undertaking consultancy roles for UNESCO and GRID-Arendal/UNEP in Timor-Leste. For Oxfam her key purpose was to provide leadership to a consortium of four international and over ten local NGOs working on an AusAID funded CCA program. For UNESCO Jessica provided technical support and guidelines for the implementation of a project focused on 'Strengthening Resilience of Coastal and Small Island Communities towards Hydro-Metrological Hazards and Climate Change Impacts' in Timor-Leste, Indonesia and the Philippines. For GRID-Arendal/UNEP Jessica undertook a desk based review of Ecosystem-based Adaptation in Caribbean Small Island Developing States, producing a research report and peer reviewed publication.

Prior to working for Oxfam, Jessica worked as a Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Adviser for the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) where her key purpose was to manage CAFOD's Piloting Global DRR programme and act as a specialist resource on DRR and CCA across the organisation. This involved developing and maintaining an international division (ID) strategy for the integration and understanding of DRR and CCA across a large international organisation with offices and staff in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Jessica acted as a specialist resource on DRR and CCA for CAFOD's ID, staying up to date with current research and practice. She advised on and managed DRR programme/project development including the management of DRR funds and linking with other relevant cross cutting issues. Jessica designed and executed strategies for building the capacity of CAFOD and its local partner's on DRR and CCA across the globe, developing user friendly tools and resources as needed. Jessica chaired CAFOD's DRR & CCA working group, the UK Bond DRR working group and represented CAFOD at other cross-organisational DRR working groups.

Jessica has demonstrated an ability to meet strict deadlines and to manage a varied workload, and has developed strategies for meeting numerous demands in an efficient and highly effective manner. Jessica Mercer is self-motivated, disciplined and resourceful. She has an ability to form strong working relationships with a wide range of people at all levels including government headquarters, country offices, international consultancy bodies and local communities, but can also achieve the highest standards whilst working unsupervised. She is an excellent communicator, able to convey complex information in a succinct and easily understood manner to a variety of audiences.

- Countries Worked:** Australia, Bangladesh, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Timor-Leste, United Kingdom, Vietnam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- Nationality:** British and Canadian citizenship
- Education:** PhD Human Geography – integrating local and scientific knowledge for DRR, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia, 2008.  
BSc (Hons) Development and Health in Disaster Management, First Class, University of Coventry, UK, 2003.
- Computer Literacy:** MS Office (including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access), Internet.
- Other Training:** RedR Essentials of Humanitarian Practice (July 2002).  
Full Clean UK Driving Licence.
- Interests:** Hiking, Horse-Riding, Running and Scuba Diving.
- Key Publications (full list available on website):** Kelman, I., **Mercer, J.** and Gaillard, JC (eds) (2017). *The Routledge Handbook of Disaster Risk Reduction including Climate Change Adaptation*. London: Routledge.
- Mercer, J.**, Kelman, I., do Rosario, F., de Deus de Jesus Lima, A., da Silva, A., Beloff, A.M. and McClean, A. (2015). Nation-building policies in Timor-Leste: Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation. *Disasters, The Journal of Disaster Studies, Policy and Management* 38(4), pp. 690-718.
- Kelman, I., Gaillard, JC and **Mercer, J.** (2015) Climate Change's Role in Disaster Risk Reduction's Future: Beyond Vulnerability and Resilience. *International Journal of Disaster Risk Science* 6(1), pp. 21-27.
- Mercer, J.**, Kurvits, T., Kelman, I. and Mavrogenis, S. (2014). Ecosystem-Based Adaptation for Food Security in the AIMS SIDS: Integrating External and Local Knowledge. *Sustainability* 6(9), pp. 5566-5597.
- Gaillard, JC and **Mercer, J.** (2013) From knowledge to action: Bridging gaps in disaster risk reduction. *Progress in Human Geography* 37(1), pp. 93-114.
- Mercer, J.** (2011). Knowledge and disaster risk reduction. In Wisner, B., Gaillard, J.C. and Kelman, I., editors, *Handbook of hazards and disaster risk reduction*. London: Routledge, pp. 89-100.

## Experience Record:

### UK & MYANMAR

Oct 2015-Dec 2015

(Malteser International)

### Consultant – Resilience Handbook Development and Provision of Training

Produced a handbook to guide Malteser International's staff and partner's in Myanmar on the development and implementation of community-based DRR including CCA activities. Provided training for local authorities and partner organizations on resilience building and the implementation of DRR including CCA strategies.

### UK

Sept 2014-Oct 2014

(UNESCO)

### Consultant

Drafted and finalised UNESCO office Jakarta's final report for their three year project: 'Strengthening Resilience of Coastal and Small Island Communities towards Hydro-Metrological Hazards and Climate Change Impacts' in Timor-Leste, Indonesia and the Philippines.

### UK

Nov 2013-March 2014

(GRID-Arendal)

### Consultant

Desk-based review of ecosystem-based adaptation for food security in Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea (AIMS) region Small Island Developing States, with a focus upon integrating local and external knowledge – produced a critical review paper submitted to an academic peer reviewed publication.

### VIETNAM

Oct 2013-Nov 2013

(CARE International in Vietnam)

### Lead Consultant – Final Evaluation

Worked in partnership with a national consultant to undertake the final evaluation of the Joint Advocacy Network Initiative in Vietnam (JANI IV) funded by DIPECHO and managed by CARE International in Vietnam on behalf of 18 network members. Developed evaluation design, undertook document review and led field work collection in Vietnam prior to producing an in-depth evaluation report and presentation.

### UK

Nov 2012-Dec 2012

(Save the Children UK)

### Proposal Development

Worked alongside Save the Children's DRR and CCA Adviser to assist four Save the Children country offices: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and India to develop and submit DIPECHO proposals. Save the Children were successful with three of the four submissions.

### PHILIPPINES

July 2012

(Plan Australia)

### Design Consultancy

Led Plan and Save the Children teams in the Philippines to review and further develop a proposed donor funded project on community based climate change adaptation and education in four provinces of the Philippines. Produced design document alongside operational ToR for each agency regarding field implementation.

### TIMOR-LESTE

May 2012

(CARE Australia)

### Consultant: Design Team Leader

This consultancy led the analysis and design process for a proposed donor funded community based climate change adaptation project within two watersheds in Liquica District, Timor-Leste. This included leading and delivering the design workshop and writing the proposal and budget. A realistic and coherent, participatory and feasible implementation strategy was provided.

### TIMOR-LESTE

Oct 2010 – April 2012

(Oxfam Australia)

### Climate Change Adaptation Manager

This position managed a consortium of four INGOs in Timor-Leste who are working together on an AusAID funded program for Community Based Climate Change Adaptation. The consortium was comprised of Oxfam, CRS, Trocaire and Caritas Australia and the program was implemented together with a range of local partners in 11 of 13 districts with a budget of AUD997, 000. This position had responsibilities for management of the whole program and subsequent reporting to AusAID. In addition, the position involved mentoring and coaching a National Climate Change Coordinator who assisted with the consortium coordination. From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012 to contract end date on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2012 this position reverted to part-time hours (3 days per week).

### TIMOR-LESTE

Jan 2012-April 2012

(UNESCO)

### Consultant

Provided advice and support (including implementation plans for years 2 and 3) to UNESCO office Jakarta on the implementation of their project: 'Strengthening Resilience of Coastal and Small Island Communities towards Hydro-Metrological Hazards and Climate Change Impacts' in Timor-Leste, Indonesia and the Philippines.

### TIMOR-LESTE

Jan 2012 – April 2012

(GRID-Arendal/UNEP)

### Consultant

Desk-based review of ecosystem-based adaptation in Caribbean Small Island Developing States – produced detailed research report and peer reviewed publication (see publication list).

### UK

June 2008 – Oct 2010

(CAFOD)

### DRR Adviser

Acted as a DRR expert and manager of CAFODs global piloting DRR programme in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The post involved a minimum of 3 months travel overseas annually with responsibilities for taking forward DRR within the whole organisation. This involved the training of CAFOD staff, partners and government officials, management of DRR budget, developing proposals, integrating CCA and DRR activities, liaising with civil society and government staff, advising on and coordinating DRR/CCA activities, and the monitoring and evaluation of DRR programmes and projects. The overall coordination of DRR activities within CAFOD was held by the DRR Adviser in coordination with relevant programme and humanitarian staff.

**AUSTRALIA**  
Aug 2005 – June 2008  
(Macquarie University)

**PhD Candidate Human Geography**

PhD thesis is based on community disaster risk reduction where Jessica developed a framework identifying how indigenous and scientific knowledge may be integrated at a community level to reduce vulnerability to environmental hazards including climate related hazards. This involved intensive participatory fieldwork with rural indigenous communities in Papua New Guinea, undertaken through my own organisation in the field. The research was funded by an International Macquarie University Research Scholarship.

**AUSTRALIA**  
July – Nov 2007  
(Australian Catholic University)

**Lecturer in Charge: Asia Pacific Undergraduate Unit**

Solely responsible for a human geography unit looking at development in the Asia Pacific region and undertaken by second year university students at the Australian Catholic University. Responsible for the writing of unit outline, the giving and development of lectures and tutorials alongside the setting of assessment tasks including coursework and exams.

**AUSTRALIA**  
Aug 2005 – April 2008  
(Macquarie University)

**Tutor: Geographies of Development Undergraduate Unit**

In overall charge of tutorials for the above unit. Responsibilities included developing tutorial workshops for second year human geography students along with guiding and facilitating discussions surrounding relevant topics.

**Lecturer: Environmental Measurement and Analysis Graduate Unit**

Responsible for teaching social survey methods for field data collection in Jervis Bay, Australia to graduate students of the environment.

**MONGOLIA**  
Oct 2004 – June 2005  
(ADRA Mongolia)

**Disaster Management Coordinator**

In overall charge of the Disaster Management Programme within ADRA Mongolia. Responsible for coordinating, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of an Oxfam funded disaster management project and an ECHO funded disaster mitigation project, with a total budget of USD\$400,000 per year. This involved development of surveys to identify specific project needs and constant communication with international donors and local organisations involved in disaster management as well as managing a total of 18 staff. As coordinator of the overall programme activities included sourcing further funding for the programme, donor accountability and building the capacity of local staff both in Ulaanbaatar and in the project area in Western Mongolia (Zavkhan). In addition, acted as Acting Country Director for periods of time up to and including 4 week periods in the absence of the Country and Program Directors.

**SOUTH AFRICA**  
Aug – Sept 2004  
(Zisizeni)

**Project Evaluator, Zisizeni Association for Development**

Responsible for evaluating ongoing projects including school feeding and HIV/AIDS education projects in a local South African NGO working with rural communities in the province of KwaZulu Natal. In the process of investigations uncovered corruption within the organisation. This resulted in the termination of the director's contract and international staff leading office operations. This involved dealing directly with the management board to solve problems and devise solutions until the UK donor asked for our withdrawal, both for safety reasons and to allow the Zulu board to put forward their own proposal for the future of the organisation.

**UK**  
Sept 2003 – Aug 2004  
(HTSPE Ltd)

**Programme Administrator, PASS, HTSPE Ltd.**

Responsible for co-ordination of marketing and project operations within the Programme of Advisory and Support Services to DFID (PASS). In particular, responsible for contracting and mobilising international expertise, evaluating project reports, whilst also responsible for writing policy briefs and disseminating programme outputs to DFID advisers. Directly assisted partners on project activities including workshops at DFID headquarters and abroad as a major part of the position involved quality control of project activities. Supervision and administrative support to ongoing overseas work and policy work within the UK was an essential component of day-to-day responsibilities. The Programme Administrator was often first port of call for many project personnel and DFID advisers, and was responsible for handling all incoming inquiries in the Project Managers absence.

Examples of involvement with projects at HTSPE includes:

**UK/GHANA**  
Sept 2003 – April 2004  
(DFID)

**Project Evaluator: DFID Food Safety Project**

Assisted with co-ordination of an ongoing project, which aimed to improve food safety amongst small and medium enterprises in Ghana. Supervised end of project workshop in Ghana and evaluated final proceedings. Negotiated contents of the final report and ways to address concerns.

**UK**  
Sept 2003 – Feb 2004  
(DFID)

**Project Administrator: DFID Hill and Agriculture Research Project.**

Undertook an administrative support role for this project. Involved in sourcing, contracting and mobilisation of numerous short-term experts and provided administrative assistance for DFID Nepal.

**AUSTRALIA**  
July 1999 – Feb 2000  
(Private Industry)

**PADI Scuba Diving Instructor, Various Dive Centres, Australia**

Extensive and involved academic and practical background in the teaching of diving. Expertise and demonstrated skills in all facets of communication; teaching, sales, giving presentations, issuing instructions and handling customer complaints.

**UK**

May – Oct 1998  
**(County Council)**

**MOZAMBIQUE**

Sept – Dec 1997  
**(Volunteer)**

**Referees:** Upon request

**Information Assistant, Salisbury Tourist Office**

Serving the public: sales and information. This position demanded exceptional communication skills.

**Research Assistant, Frontier Expeditions**

Extensive training and involvement in data collection related to marine conservation. Worked closely with a team of 13 research assistants and 6 scientists.