This is a project which started at COP25 in Madrid 2019. At that meeting of the countries who are members of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement, the Santiago Network for averting, minimising and addressing loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change (Santiago Network) was established.

The Santiago Network offered hope to frontline communities in the climate crisis that a body had been created to help them address loss and damage. This body would make sure there was action and support being provided on the ground in their communities including helping them access finance, technology and build their capacity to address these impacts. This was in the context of a world where climate impacts are increasing, and this is being felt by the most vulnerable people in our society who are the least responsible for climate change. These impacts are rapidly becoming worse.

This project started under the banner of the Loss and Damage Collaboration, an informal group of practitioners, researchers, activists and decision makers from both the global North and South who have expertise on a range of topics relating to the need to address loss and damage. It had a number of projects, including the Santiago Network Project which developed a committed group from a range of backgrounds led by Doreen Stabinsky and Heidi White who were concerned that the Santiago Network might become no more than a website.

The Santiago Network Working Group, as it was then called, has since been tireless in seeking to steer the negotiations on the Santiago Network from something that had become a website to something that had a dedicated negotiations stream under the UNFCCC, and a comprehensive decision with dedicated finance, agreed form and functions and a process for review. This included publications; advocacy e.g. interventions at meetings of negotiators on the Santiago Network and participation in and chairing of meetings of the Adaptation and Loss and Damage Friends Group which is led by the UK COP26 Presidency team; as well as coordination, capacity building, and support on the ground at the COP26 negotiations in Glasgow, United Kingdom in November 2021.

At COP26 there was positive progress, and the work of the Santiago Network Project will now shift to the 2022 negotiations where financial arrangements will be further elaborated and a decision will be adopted regarding the form or ‘institutional arrangements’ of the Santiago Network to finalise the decision to operationalise the Santiago Network and enable it to provide the help that vulnerable communities need to survive.

The Santiago Network Project is open to members from any background. It is important that our input into the negotiations is well-informed and based on the best available advice. We are particularly concerned to involve marginalised groups whose voices are not always heard to ensure the best outcome possible for the negotiations. We cannot be perfect but we can be ambitious and try as much as possible to learn from the past so that the assistance that is urgently needed is provided. These communities need help now and we need to ensure that the Santiago Network becomes effectively operationalised at COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

*For enquiries directly related to the Santiago Network Project please contact the Project Lead heidimareewhite@gmail.com

* For enquiries about the membership of the Loss and Damage Collaboration (L&DC) and its projects including the Santiago Network Project, the Glasgow Dialogue Project and other important projects, or to discuss providing funding for our work which relies on pro bono assistance and ad hoc funding, please contact lossanddamagecollaborations@gmail.com You can find us at lossanddamagecollaboration.org