

Draft programme – 26 April 2013

World Social Science Seminar

"Decision-making under conditions of uncertainty"

Dates: Monday 9 – Friday 13 December 2013

Venue: Wellington and Christchurch, New Zealand

Partners: ISSC; RIA Working Group of IRDR; ICoE Taipei; START

World Social Science Fellows Programme

- Capacity building program that focuses on talented early career social scientists who can help create knowledge for solutions to global challenges
- Fellows have obtained their Ph D within the last five years, or with equivalent research experience if they do not have a PhD

Seminar

- In an area of Risk Interpretation and Action (RIA)
- On a global challenge, with particular relevance to developing countries
- IRDR will lead on the content due to access to top experts in the field
- Seminars in the program to be the beginning of international collaborative research teams/networks
- Format and design of seminar to stimulate creative work and the production of concrete results

Participants

- Fellows: a maximum of 20 early career social scientists with a relevant background and a particular interest in working in inter- and trans-disciplinary teams on the issue at hand
- At least half of the Fellows to come from the Global South
- Fellows selected by the programme's International Advisory Team, in cooperation with IRDR SC/RIA/ ICoE Taipei/START
- "Top international experts": experts in the field, with a good broader overview as well, and willingness to engage with early career scientists; half to come from the Global South. – Professor Richard Eiser (University of Sheffield, UK); Professor

Douglas Paton (University of Tasmania); Professor John McClure (Victoria University, New Zealand). Two more to be announced – from Asia, Africa or South America.

- Policy makers/practitioners, activists, and other stakeholders: to ground discussions in “real life” concerns – The draft has received support from several New Zealand government agencies that are keen to participate. Will work with them to allow for their active participation in the programme.

Content of the Seminar

A key issue emerging from recent disasters is understanding the ways in which people interpret risks and respond, based on these interpretations. Acceptable risk in the context of risk reduction and building safety always involves interactions between natural (physical) and human (behavioural and engineering) factors. Decision-making under conditions of uncertainty has been inadequately described by traditional models of ‘rational choice’. Attention is now shifting to the ways in which people’s interpretations of risks are shaped by their own experience, personal feelings and values, cultural beliefs and interpersonal and societal dynamics. Furthermore, recent research has shown that lack of access to and/or framing of risk information have contributed to much of the misunderstanding between groups.

Following the 2010-2011 Canterbury earthquake sequence in New Zealand many risk management policies have been called into question, and are under review. The issues highlighted by these events are not unique to New Zealand, and are key to building sustainably, and to increasing community resilience to disasters. In order to determine levels of acceptable risk an integrated understanding of engineering performance, risk language and public perception of risk is required. This will require the combined knowledge of physical scientists, engineers, land-use planners and behavioural scientists, working closely with affected individuals and communities and various government departments and agencies. This seminar will explore risk assessment decision-making under conditions of uncertainty and of the role science and policy agencies play in this process both before disasters and in the recovery phase.

This seminar is linked to the Risk Interpretation and Action Working Group (RIA) of the Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR) programme, which is co-sponsored by the International Council for Science (ICSU), the International Social Science Council (ISSC), and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR).

Seminar Coordinator:

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Appendix 1

World Social Science Seminar "Decision-making under conditions of uncertainty"

Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

At the seminar, Fellows and a number of senior scientists identify a critical research agenda on sustainable urbanization and develop plans to continue work on this agenda after the seminar. Fellows are in the lead and determine priorities and action plans for their work.

Monday 9 December

Getting started and Fellows' presentations on "What do you regard as the three most urgent questions related to decision-making under conditions of uncertainty in the 21st Century?"

- 1200-1300: Welcome and tour of the university (meet at)
- 1300-1400: *First lunch together:*
- 1400-1500: Room: 10A02 (Campus Old Museum Building Lecture Theatre)
Introduction, goals, overview of programme
- 1500-1510: *Short break*
- 1510- 1610: Four presentations by Fellows plus reactions
- 1610-1630: *Tea break*
- 1630-1730: Four presentations by Fellows plus reactions
- 1730-1800: Plenary discussions on themes emerging (including report-backs by Fellows)
- Evening: Free
(1800-1900: senior scientists and ISSC discuss transition to Day 2)

Tuesday 10 December

Fellows' presentations on "What do you regard as the three most urgent questions related to decision-making under conditions of uncertainty in the 21st Century?"

- 0900-0930: Breakfast
- 9300-1000: Room: 10A02 (Campus Old Museum Building Lecture Theatre)
Overnight reflections
- 1000-1100: Four presentations by Fellows plus reactions
- 1100-1115: *Coffee break*
- 1115-1215: Four presentations by Fellows plus reactions
- 1215-1315: Four presentations by Fellows plus reactions

1315-1415: Plenary discussion of themes emerging

1415-1730: *Lunch*

1730-1830: *Dinner*

1830-1930: Public lecture

Room:

Senior scientists and ISSC discuss transition to Day 3 in the evening

Wednesday 11 December

Building an analytical framework for discussions

0830-9000: Breakfast

1000-1045 Travel to Christchurch

1130-1400 Coach tour of Christchurch including lunch stop

1400-1445: Presentation TBA: "" + questions

1445-1530: Presentation TBA: "" + questions "+ questions

1530: *Coffee break*

1545-1630: Lecture : Issues around the Canterbury rebuild

Dinner

Public round table on " Decision-making under conditions of uncertainty following the Canterbury earthquakes ", with x,y,z

Senior scientists and ISSC discuss transition to Day 4 in the evening

Thursday 12 December

What are the 21st century decision-making environments?

Thursday is where the transition from discussing the state-of-the-art into critical and creative work starts. Activities focus on the future of decision-making first half of the 21st century, the regional differences and similarities of these processes.

0900-0930: Breakfast

Venue: Tower Room, Chateau on the Park, Christchurch

0930-1000: Overnight reflections: mid-way evaluation and transition into joint work

1000-1100: Break-out group discussions

1100-1115: *Coffee break*

1115-1215: Break-out group discussions

1215-1300: *Lunch*

1300-1400: Plenary discussion

1400-1500: Break-out group discussions

1500-1600: Plenary discussions

Return travel to Wellington

Friday 13 December

Joint Projects

0900-0930: Breakfast

Room: 10A02 (Massey Museum Building Lecture Theatre)

Fellows complete plans for a joint product and possible other joint activities, and agree on a division of tasks to take them forward.

0900-1000: Overnight reflections

1000-1100: Break-out groups discussions

1100-1130: *Coffee break*

1130-1230: Plenary discussions and evaluation of seminar

1230-1300: Lunch

1300: End of seminar

Senior scientists and ISSC tie up any loose ends

Appendix 2

<i>Seminar budget</i>	Estimated costs in Euro	Total cost Estimate
<i>Travel to seminar</i>		
International travel for Fellows, convenors, social science leaders and staff	Per person: €1,700 *	€51,000
<i>Accommodation at seminar</i>		
Hotel accommodation for Fellows, convenors, social science leaders and staff – 8 nights	Per person: €1,045 **	€31,350
<i>Subsistence participants</i>		
Meals for Fellows, convenors, social science leaders, staff – 8 days	Per person: €416 ***	€12,480
Additional catering	€0	€0
<i>Other</i>		
Materials, photocopying, etc	€200	€200
Venue in Wellington: sponsored by Massey University – 3 days	€0	€0
Venue in Christchurch – 2 days	€500	€500
Translation costs (if necessary)	€0	€0
Return airfare Wellington-Christchurch	Per person: €194	€5,820
Transfers to and from Christchurch airport	Per person: €20	€600
Coach in Christchurch	€260	€260
<i>Total cost estimate, based on a total of 30 people (5 presenters and 20 attendees):</i>		€102,210

* Figure would depend on their location; this is the average cost for budgeting purposes.

** Average cost for 5 nights: Wellington (4 nights) and Christchurch (1 night).

*** Average cost for breakfast, morning tea, lunch & afternoon tea (5 days) and dinner (4 evenings).

Appendix 3

Risk Interpretation and Action (RIA) Working Group

RIA focuses on the question of how people - both decision-makers and ordinary citizens - make decisions, individually and collectively, in the face of risk. Understanding decision-making in complex and changing risk contexts, risk governance and institutional development is the goal. Understanding how people interpret risks and choose actions based on their interpretations is vital to any strategy for disaster reduction. In this working group's first activity, the group reviews and synthesizes relevant literature to develop a conceptual framework to guide future research in this area. The group stresses that risks in the context of natural hazards always involve interactions between natural (physical) and human (behavioural) factors. Decision-making under conditions of uncertainty is inadequately described by traditional models of 'rational choice'. Instead, attention needs to be paid to how people's interpretations of risks are shaped by their own experience, personal feelings and values, cultural beliefs and interpersonal and societal dynamics. Furthermore, access to information and capacity for self-protection are typically distributed unevenly within populations. Hence trust is a critical moderator of the effectiveness of any policy for risk communication and public engagement. RIA activities aim to make these concepts and theories more accessible to a range of disciplines and to practitioners in the field of natural hazards and to promote better integration of behavioral and social sciences in disaster risk research especially in regard to decision making.