



**Global Network**  
of Civil Society Organisations  
for Disaster Reduction



## **Risk Interpretation and Action**

An agenda setting workshop to better integrate behavioural and social science and practitioner approaches to knowledge and learning in resilience building for disaster risk management

16-17 May 2013, King's College London

Room: K0.18, ground floor, King's Building

**Co-Chairs:** Mark Pelling (IRDR/KCL), Terry Gibson (GNDR) and Emma Visman (HFP/NERC)

How do scientists, practitioners and people at risk make decisions, individually and collectively? Social theory, psychology and learning theory have all addressed this question but somewhat independently. This has led to a number of discontinuities in the analysis of risk communication and perception and gaps research and practitioner activity (and funding). The result is a number of unanswered questions:

**Can placing learning in the centre of science and policy lead to a paradigm shift for understanding and acting on resilience and transformation?** Can learning theory (including social learning) connect with action research and knowledge exchange work to create a paradigm shift for risk management – one built on knowledge and learning processes and perception?

**What are the practical obstacles to a more flexible and knowledge rich humanitarian and development sector and professional practice?** How do people's decisions, perhaps due to social norms and perceived or actual constraints on their freedom of choice, diverge from evaluations of risk? How can we better theorise and research the relationships between organisational and social structures on the one hand and individual agency on the other to better understand individual and social learning and action in risk management organisations including humanitarian and development agencies?

**How much emphasis should be placed on risk forecasting versus communication?** If the step change in risk avoidance is to come from risk communication why is this consistently underfunded compared to hazard modelling? Are the right questions being asked?

*Format:* The workshop will be structured around short presentations and break-out group discussions.

*Objectives:* The workshop has three specific outputs: (1) to feed directly into the evolving research plan for the Risk Interpretation and Action working group of the IRDR<sup>1</sup>; (2) to support NERC Knowledge Exchange Fellows and others working at the interface of science and policy; (3) to contribute to the development of a GNDR programme of action research – 'Action at the Frontline' on learning

<sup>1</sup> IRDR – Integrated Research in Disaster Risk, is an international research programme supported by ICSU, ISSC and UNISDR. For more information see <http://www.irdrinternational.org/>

processes and communication. The workshop is timed to precede the ISDR Global Platform, Geneva, and will similarly feed into discussions at this event.

**Homework:**

In advance of the meeting and when preparing papers we ask you to consider two questions:

*1. What are the methodological and conceptual gaps and challenges impeding the transfer of local experiential knowledge into wider policy and science domains for natural hazard and vulnerability management and the building of local resilience?*

*2. What organisational and discursive forms have you used or observed that have encouraged collaboration between natural and social science research, humanitarian and development NGOs and local practice? What practical tactics have you or your organisation deployed to better persuade others to collaborate in integrating local, scientific and practice based knowledge?*

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## **THURSDAY 16 MAY: A Survey of Knowledge exchange challenges**

09.00–09.15: Arrival, tea and coffee

09.15: Welcome and logistics, Mark Pelling

09.15–09.30: Three co-chairs present workshop aims from NERC KE/HFP, GNDR and IRDR perspectives.

### 09.30- 10.45: Paper Session 1

09.30-09.55: **Colin McQuistan, Practical Action**, Community early warning systems in Nepal: turning good ideas into practice

09.55-10.20: **Emma Visman, Humanitarian Futures Programme NERC Knowledge Exchange Fellow**, Creating channels for exchanging knowledge which value the wide range of knowledge sources required to support resilience building.

10.20-10.45: **Britt-Marie Drott Sjöberg, Norwegian University of Science and Technology**, The power and detriments of non-communication.

10.45-11.00 COFFEE BREAK

11.00-11.25: **Charlie McLaren, UKCDS** UKCDS' role as a knowledge broker

11.25-11.50: **Perko Tanja, Belgian Nuclear Research Centre SCK·CEN** Salience of the Fukushima accident on the public agenda: media content analysis.

11.50 – 12.15: Plenary discussion, first draft of top ten challenges, Emma Visman to chair

12.15 – 13.30 LUNCH – participants to pay approx £5.

### 13.30-17.00 Paper Session 2

13.30-13.55: **Richard Ewbank, Christian Aid**, Making climate services useful for rural development: opportunities and challenges

13.55-14.20: **Ann Bostrom, University of Washington**, U.S. Risk interpretation and action funding: trends, strategies and opportunities

14.20-14.45: **Maria Veronica Bastias, Nguza Siyambango, Gert van Rooy and Terry Gibson, GNDR**, Local learning and obstacles to action: case studies and reflection.

14.45-15.00 AFTERNOON TEA

15.00-15.25: **Christopher G. Burton, Global Earthquake Model**, The development of measures of community resilience to natural hazards and disasters.

15.25-15.50: **Terry Cannon, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex**, Myths and sense in dealing with disasters and climate change.

15.50 – 16.15: Plenary discussion, final draft of top ten challenges, Mark Pelling to chair

16.15 – 16.25 Evening logistics and introduction to day two, Terry Gibson to chair: Homework: Individuals to reflect on the ten challenges and what they know about: a) how you have experienced these challenges, b) how you have avoided or overcome them.

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17.15 – 18.15: Keynote Speech in collaboration with the Earth and Environmental Dynamics Research Group: Professor Stuart Lane, Faculté des Géosciences et de l'Environnement, Université de Lausanne, "Acting, Predicting and Intervening in a Socio-Hydrological World". Pyramid Room, Department of Geography, 4<sup>th</sup> floor.

19.00 – 23.00 Evening social event

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**FRIDAY 17 MAY: How to make knowledge transferable between science, policy and those at risk?**

**Main room:** K0.18

**Break out rooms:** K4.31 & K0.20

09.00–09.15. Arrival.

09.15-09.30 Mark welcome, Terry reminder on rules and table settings.

09.30-10.45 Discussion Session 1:

09.30-10.15 breakout groups: What experience is there of methods/approaches/tactics for moving knowledge generated by local actors based in experience and context to more reflective/strategic knowledge on community risk and its management held by scientists and policy organisations? How do these approaches address the challenges identified in Day 1?

10.15–10.45 Plenary feedback

10.45-11.30 Discussion Session II:

10.45-11.30 breakout groups: What experience is there of methods/approaches for moving knowledge from formal science to policy and community actors? What happens to the science in this process of translation and communication? How far is the production of science influenced by anticipated user needs, is it compromised/improved? How do these approaches address the challenges identified in Day 1?

11.30-12.00 Plenary feedback

12.00–13.30 LUNCH

13.30–14.45 Discussion Session II:

13.30 – 14.15 breakout groups: What advice is there for better persuading other domains (community, policy, academic) of the value of your science and/or knowledge? What lessons do you have from your personal experience for supporting integrative science approaches? How do these approaches address the challenges identified in Day 1?

14.15–14.45 Plenary feedback

14.45–15.00. Closing plenary

What have you learnt from the process over these two days?

What do you think are the key research questions for IRDR, GN and NERC to take forward?

What do you think are the key policy recommendations for policy and community actors – are they the same, different?

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## **FRIDAY 17 MAY – GNDR CLOSED SESSION**

**Main room:** K0.18

15.00 – 18.00 GNDR closed session. Applying insights and learning from the workshop to the design of the Action at the Frontline programme in order to present these at a further Action at the Frontline workshop at GP-DRR Geneva on May 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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### **Meeting Logistics**

The main workshop room will be the War Studies Meeting Room, K6.07, 6<sup>th</sup> floor, King's Building, Strand Campus.

A Map of the Strand campus can be downloaded from  
<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/campuslife/campuses/strand/Strand.aspx>

The closest reasonably priced hotel is the Strand Palace Hotel:  
<http://www.strandpalacehotel.co.uk/>

Please do get in touch with me if you wish any information on airport transfers, ideas for alternative hotels etc.

### **Costs**

The workshop is intended to bring together three communities of practice interested in knowledge exchange and behaviour change for disaster risk reduction. Not unusually for such a cross-cutting initiative there is no substantial funding beyond that offers by your own institutions and networks. Please do come prepared to cover the costs of lunch (around £5.00 a day) and evening meals.

I am sorry we can not be more generous but hopefully this meeting will be a step in establishing a formal international and cross-sectoral network on knowledge exchange that can leverage greater support in the future. Your generosity is much appreciated!

### **Emergencies**

If you need to get in contact with us in transit then please use the following contact:  
Sophie Blackburn 07825 751 321.

## List of Participants

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