

Dealing with Disasters, GCRF, UK Alliance for Disaster Research, Disasters Research Group and UK Collaborative for Development Research

DwD-GCRF-UKADR-DRG-UKCDR International Conference, 2019

17th, 18th and 19th July @ Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

New points of departure in transitioning disaster reduction and sustainability challenges

POST EVENT – INITIAL REPORT

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This year's conference aimed to stimulate debate and advance thinking around 'New Points of Departure in Transitioning Disaster Reduction and Sustainability Challenges', to build on the progress made in the recent United Nations Global Platform 2019 and in anticipation of the forthcoming Climate Summit. There is a need for new points of departure in relation to science and technology, political will and behaviour in bringing systemic changes to the way people take on disaster threats and sustainability challenges, to survive and for future quality of life.

Supported by the UK's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) the occasion combined the 12th Dealing with Disasters (DwD) and 3rd UK Alliance of Disaster Research (UKADR) Conferences, Disaster Research Group (DRG) and UK Collaborative for Development Research (UKCDR) in examining current advances and future research needs. The event took place on the 10th Anniversary of the Disasters Research Group (DRG). Further details on each of these institutions and the

Northumbria University Disaster and Development Network (DDN) is available in the main conference brochure posted to the web site www.northumbria.ac.uk/dwd2019.

The conference was attended by 130 delegates from 17 countries. Structured into six plenary and 18 parallel sessions it included 100 presentations, five workshops, a symposium the Annual General Meeting of the United Kingdom Alliance for Disaster Research (UKADR). Whilst this was not the largest of the multi-disciplinary Dealing with Disasters events hosted by Northumbria to date it facilitated highly significant content and policy reach and has received positive feedback.

Following an opening by the Northumbria Pro Vice-Chancellor, Lucy Winskell, and introductions from the partner institutions the envoy of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General, Ricardo Mena, provided an overview of the current state of knowledge application towards global targets of disaster risk reduction alongside the sustainable development agenda.

The UK Government's Department for International Development representative and Senior Humanitarian Advisor, Roger Bellers, presented the new emphasis for his department on fragility and conflict affected regions. This was followed by the first of a series of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) inputs. Ruth Kelman for NERC presented on investment into resilient environments. Later plenaries included inputs from ESRC on inequitable resilience and from the GCRF, UK Space Agency and the European Commission.

Plenaries on the second day of the conference began with a special address from the Disaster Risk Management Focal Point of the World Health Organisation, Jonathan Abrahams. He was joined by the representative of the WHO Kobe Centre from Japan Ryoma Kayano, Head of Global Disaster Risk Reduction for Public Health England, Virginia Murray, Ben Taylor, Chief Executive of Evidence Aid and a special delegation from the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Parallel sessions and plenaries included inputs from 17 UK University physical, environmental and social sciences groups and six Non-Governmental Organisations.

Two workshops lead by Public Health England on 'Hazards redefinition' and by Northumbria on 'Action Data' took place as part of Working Groups of the United Nations, and also being supported by GCRF. A workshop hosted by Alliance to Feed the Earth in Disasters (ALLFED) provided a team of its staff from varied backgrounds in interactive exploration of scenarios. A workshop provided by University of Salford THINKlab demonstrated state of the art satellite and modelling technologies for enhancing disaster risk reduction and response.

Following the second day opening plenary, the WHO Thematic Platform for Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management Research Network symposium consisted of two further sessions with 12 inputs, including four from DDN affiliates and one from Northumbria Healthcare Trust. The Platform was launched as part of the inclusion of health (and well-being) in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and follows last years research Summit of the same Platform at the Chinese University of Hong Kong exactly one year earlier. A contribution to this process had also been made via the 2015 Dealing with Disasters conference on Health Centred Disaster Risk Reduction.

Two of the recently established large GCRF Research Hubs, on Urban Risk Transitions (Tomorrow's Cities) and Living Deltas provided a first combined GCRF hubs session. This included debate around core themes of the hubs and the challenges and opportunities offered by this new form of UK research investment and with inputs from nine institutions.

A special workshop session of the 'Youth Voice' in Disaster Risk Reduction was organised by Mark Ashley Parry of the Northumbria University Disaster and Development Society (DDS). This included inputs from schools, the South African Youth Centre for DRR, the Corpo Italiano di San Lazzaro, Italy, Kyoto University, Japan and by remote link up from Northumbria Post-graduate students currently carrying out field work in one of the more isolated regions of Nepal. This special session was also stimulated by current actions surrounding the school climate action and Extinction Rebellion.

A fuller report on the proceedings and outcome of the conference is being worked on for later release. It is intended that all presentations will be made available online for those who consent to that.

The hosts at Northumbria University are thankful to the partner organisations, the United Kingdom Alliance for Disaster Research (UKADR), the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), the Disasters Research Group (DRG) and the United Kingdom Collaborative for Development Research (UKADR) for this combined conference. Institutional supporting organisations were the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), Public Health England (PHE), Integrated Research on Disaster Risk (IRDR), University of Bristol Cabot Institute, Collaborating Centre for Oxford University and Chinese University of Hong (CCOUC), WHO Thematic Platform for Health Emergency and Disaster Risk Management and the Global Alliance of Disaster Research Institutes (GADRI). The event was supported by a Committee of nine people from within this group who are named in the main conference documentation. The event benefitted from the support of Northumbria Research and Innovation Services and Northumbria Campus Services.

The Conference Chair would also like to specifically thank staff and students of the Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences and the wider Northumbria University who in various ways contributed inputs. Thanks to Mark Ashley Parry and to Becky Richardson for their important enthusiasm and back up across several academic and logistical aspects of delivery.