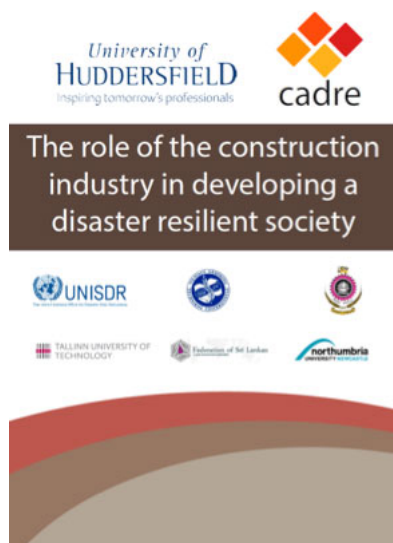


Construction role to Increase Societal Resilience to Disasters

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An international workshop entitled: "Market Demands in the Construction Industry to Increase Societal Resilience to Disasters" was held on the 9th December 2015 in Colombo, Sri Lanka as part of the CADRE (<http://www.hud.ac.uk/research/researchcentres/gdrc/researchprojects/cadre/>) (Collaborative Action towards Disaster Resilience Education) is an EU funded project led by GDRC aims to address current and emerging labour market demands in the construction industry to increase societal resilience to disasters.

The aim of the workshop was twofold:

1. To disseminate stakeholder requirements that have emerged from the study so far, helping to mainstream disaster resilience within the construction process
2. To refine and validate the needs and skills identified thus far, and identify key themes that need further investigations

Background to the workshop:

Disasters continue to exact a heavy toll on many communities around the world, including those in Sri Lanka. Globally during the last 10 years, over 700 thousand people have lost their lives, 1.4 million have been injured and approximately 23 million have been made homeless as a result of disasters. More than 1.5 billion people have been affected by disasters in various ways, with women, children and people in vulnerable situations disproportionately affected. The total economic loss was more than \$1.3 trillion.

It is critical to anticipate, plan for and reduce disaster risk in order to more effectively protect people, communities, their livelihoods, health, cultural heritage, socioeconomic assets and ecosystems, and thus strengthen their resilience. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, endorsed by 187 UN states earlier this year, recognises that disaster risk reduction practice need to be multi-hazard and multispectral, inclusive and accessible in order to be efficient and effective.

The vital role of the built environment in serving human endeavours means that when elements of it are damaged or destroyed, the ability of society to function – economically and socially – severely disrupted. The protective characteristics of the built environment offer an important means by which humanity can reduce the risk posed by hazards, thereby preventing a disaster. Conversely, post-disaster, the loss of critical buildings and infrastructure can greatly increase a community's vulnerability to hazards in the future. Finally, the individual and local nature of the environment, shaped by context, restricts our ability to apply generic solutions.



Photos: above and below – cross section of the workshop participants



Key construction industry representatives, policy makers and senior academics were invited to be part of the workshop. Attendees included:

- Dr Jerry Velasquez - Chief of Section, Advocacy and Outreach UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR)
- Conrad de Tissera, Chairman, Sri Lanka Construction Industry Development Authority (CIDA)
- Mr Virajh Dias, Addl. General Manager, CECB
- Professor Sujeeva Setunge, RMIT, Australia
- Ms Hemanthi Goonesekera, CEO, Addl. General Manager
- Mr Suranga Kahandawa, World Bank Sri Lanka

Session started with an introduction to the CADRE project, summarised by Professor Richard Haigh. Policy context was highlighted by Dr Jerry Velasquez, *Chief of Section, Advocacy and Outreach UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), Geneva, Switzerland.*

Photo: Professor Richard Haigh – setting the scene



Dr Jerry Velasquez, UNISDR – policy context and links of CADRE plans to Sendai Framework



Initiative on market demands and skills needs in the construction industry to increase societal resilience to disasters followed which was presented by Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga & Dr Chamindi Malalgoda from GDRC and Ms Shayani Weeresinghe from University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka.

Photo: Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga of GDRC presenting the initiative



Photo: Dr Chamindi Malalgoda of GDRC



Key findings of the initiative followed with invited responses from expert speakers representing academia, policy and practice.



Photo: Conrad de Tissera, Chairman, Sri Lanka Construction Industry Development Authority (CIDA) invited response from policy and practice



Photo: Mr Virajh Dias, Additional General Manager, CECB

Workshop was concluded with future plans including key questions for the future

Workshop brief can be found here (</media/universityofhuddersfield/content2013/schools/artdesignandarchitecture/images/research/gdrc/news/2015-16/CADREworkshopbrief.pdf>) (237K)

Please visit the CADRE Web site for more information about the project: <http://www.hud.ac.uk/research/researchcentres/gdrc/researchprojects/cadre/>
(<http://www.hud.ac.uk/research/researchcentres/gdrc/researchprojects/cadre/>)

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