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Increasing the European societies' resilience to disasters of human and natural origin

Mary McManus, Vera Barron and their research colleagues Profs Dilanthi Amaratunga and Richard Haigh at the University of Salford explain how engaging with EU education and training programmes has enabled colleagues to strengthen their individual professional profiles and developed their international networks.

Since their inception in the mid-1990s, EU education and training programmes have played an integral part in supporting University of Salford staff and student mobility as well as developing new professional courses, modules and entire joint programmes of study. Between 2009 and 2013 the University has taken part in 55 projects, which span over 150 international partners.

Engagement with the European education and training programmes at Salford started with a small group of enthusiastic staff members, a handful of projects and a bottom-up approach to the development of initial activities. These included: orthotic and prosthetic education courses for the Russian Federation (TEMPUS 2006 Dr Heath); a European food safety standards training programme (LEONARDO 2006 Prof Taylor); a joint masters in electronic engineering (Prof Takruri-Rizk, TEMPUS 2013); dementia care (LLP ERASMUS 2013 Dr Bolton) to the ANDROID network, which spans 70 partner institutions and aims to promote co-operation and innovation among European Higher Education to increase society's resilience to disasters (LLP Erasmus Multilateral Networks Prof Haigh).

Comprehensive support structures have been put in place to ensure that staff who apply for, and deliver, EU funded projects have access to guidance throughout the proposal development and project implementation stages. The University has a dedicated funding officer who specializes in EU education and training programmes and coordinates the development of proposals at institutional level: sharing best practice, examples of previously successful applications, and linking staff where there

<p>European Conference</p>	<p>are clear project synergies or help is needed. At the other end of the process, the monitoring team provides advice and guidance during project implementation stages, advising and ensuring that the project teams maintain satisfactory audit trail.</p>
<p>UK students trailing EU peers on take up of Erasmus exchanges</p>	<p>But the real benefits happen on the ground: for instance Professor Richard Haigh and Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga's recent ANDROID project is the latest in a succession of EU projects addressing Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment.</p>
<p>European Commission asks the public sector to take a more entrepreneurial approach</p>	<p>Richard and Dilanthi set up the ANDROID network to promote co-operation and increase society's resilience to disasters of human and natural origin. Supported by a three year Erasmus Multilateral Networks grant, the network's teaching and research is concerned with what resilience is, what it means to society, and how societies might achieve greater resilience in the face of increasing threats from natural and human induced hazards.</p>
<p>International Focus 102 - Editorial & Contents</p>	
<p>International Focus 101</p>	<p>The network spanned 31 countries, 28 of them in Europe, and had 67 core member institutions from academia, industry, national and local government, and major national and international non-governmental organisations. Alongside the European partners, there are three 'third country' partners from Australia, Canada and Sri Lanka, bringing a much-needed global perspective. The network has since grown to embrace more than 200 further associate member institutions.</p>
<p>International Focus 100</p>	
<p>International Focus 99</p>	
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<p>International Focus 96</p>	<p>Establishing and managing a network of this scale and scope brought a range of benefits to the University of Salford and the academic team at the Centre for Disaster Resilience as well as posing many challenges; from differing national requirements, complexity in the administration of funds, and a search for common terms across countries, cultures, sectors and disciplines.</p>
<p>Archive - International Focus</p>	
<hr/> <p>European Funding Bulletin</p>	
<hr/> <p>Go International Newsletter</p>	<p>The network increased the recognition and reputation of both the University of Salford and individual academics as an international player, with increased levels of exposure and visibility on the international stage in this increasingly important area of research. By working with leading scientists, technologists and engineers around the world, this major international engagement has boosted our international standing. This brings the potential to reposition the University in terms of international ranking and expertise, and further grow international strategic partnerships and alliances.</p>
<hr/> <p>Newton Funding Bulletin</p>	<p>The network has also expanded our access to knowledge and expertise, providing the resources to bring together and promote discourse among applied, human, social and natural scientists to: pool their results and findings, discuss methods and develop inter-disciplinary explanations that increase society's resilience to disasters. Modern research, such as addressing the diverse challenges associated with tackling disaster risk, demands an ever-widening range of skills. A multilateral approach is required to harness all the knowledge, skills and techniques required.</p>
	<p>Finally, the benefits of working with others are not confined to the links with one's immediate collaborators. The ANDROID network has also had the effect of 'plugging' the Centre for Disaster Resilience into a wider network of contacts in the disaster research community. The Centre has thus been able to diffuse their own research findings to a much wider audience than through their own direct contacts.</p>
	<p>More broadly, this international collaboration has fostered a strong embedded culture of internationalism, which encourages Salford staff, students and stakeholders to view the world from both a local and a global perspective, extends international engagement, contributes to teaching and research goals, and extends influence and reputation.</p>

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