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Education

Posted by Tony Flynn on 3rd April 2012 at 11:43 AM

New academic network for disaster resilience created by EU

Experts from the University of Salford are at the head of a new academic network funded by the European Union to improve disaster preparedness in cities worldwide.

The project, called ANDROID (Academic Network for Disaster Resilience to Optimise Educational Development), aims to promote co-operation and innovation among European higher education institutions to increase society's resilience to disasters of human and natural origin – such as earthquakes or the damage caused by ongoing wars.

ANDROID, worth nearly €800,000, will run for three years and is led by Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga, Head of the University's Centre for Disaster Resilience, and Dr Richard Haigh, a senior lecturer.

So far a consortium of partners from 64 European higher education institutions has embarked on the project and they will soon be joined by three institutions from Australia, Canada and Sri-Lanka.

"There is now recognition of the need for collaboration on a large scale that involves a plurality of actors. ANDROID is based on an inter-disciplinary consortium of partners that comprises scientists from applied human, social and natural disciplines. Addressing disaster risk is an endless or continuous process that cannot stop," Professor Amaratunga said.

Over three years, the consortium partners will describe, analyse and compare the capacity of European cities and higher education institutions to address disaster risk. ANDROID will provide the link between the research and the public, helping to reinforce the connection between education and society.

As part of its vision, the Centre for Disaster Resilience aims to provide advice and guidance for policymakers and practitioners on the role of building and construction to anticipate and respond to unexpected events that damage the environment.

Alongside ANDROID, the Centre is currently engaged in various research projects, including CEREBELLA (Community Engagement for Risk Erosion in Bangladesh to Enhance LifeLong Advantage).

The goal of this partnership between the School of the Built Environment's Centre for Disaster Resilience and Patuakhali Science and Technology University in Bangladesh is to share skills, knowledge and experience on climate change and disaster management.

The next phase of ANDROID will involve using all the data collected by the consortium partners to create laws and other practical measures to build resilience.

Source: Salford University.

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