



Special Themed issue of the International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment (IJDRBE)

ON

The “State of DRR at the Local Level” :A 2015 Report on the Patterns of Disaster Risk Reduction Actions at Local Level

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Background

The Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development and the on-going consultations for the Post-2015 Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (HFA2) reaffirmed the importance of building the resilience of people and communities to disasters. The world is steadily becoming more urban, and although the level of urbanization is far higher in the developed world, the annual ‘urbanization rate’ is much faster in the developing world. Not surprisingly, the primary urban agglomerations with the highest concentrations of people and economic activity mostly overlap with the areas of extreme or high risk related to disasters such as coastal areas, along rivers and in flood plains. It is estimated by World Bank that the population in large cities exposed to cyclones will increase from 310 to 680 million between 2000 and 2050. It is also estimated that urban population exposed in areas with a significant probability of a major earthquake will increase from 370 million in 2000 to 870 million in 2050¹.

Fast growing cities and urban areas of the world are engines of growth and wealth accumulation. This growth has positive results in social improvements, cultural, educational and other positive impacts. On the other hand, evidence demonstrates that fast economic growth, combined with fast population expansion in urban areas, also increases disaster vulnerability and exposure. The challenges relate to answering the questions of what factors motivate or influence decisions to invest in DRM, and more specifically, to what extent can risk-related information gathered from land-use and development planning be used in an expanded professional environment to inform investment decisions enhanced by the inclusion of DRM values?

With local governments increasingly taking centre stage in the sustainable development and prosperity of nations, the need for globally comparable data and knowledge of disasters risks has even become greater. Though national and regional patterns of risks are known, what is less understood is how local governments, the institutions closest to citizens and their communities, respond to these threats by proactively reducing these risks. Also, while there is some understanding on the expectations and division of responsibilities between central and local government actions on disaster risk reduction, little is known on how these expectations are empowered in terms of provision of capacity, resources and abilities at the local level. In addition, it is also not clear how existing gaps, barriers, and challenges to implement DRR at local level (both urban and rural) can be overcome by learning from sound practices and experience existing elsewhere.

This themed issue, in collaboration with the ANDROID Disaster Resilience network, therefore will consolidate available knowledge on the patterns of disaster risk reduction actions, and analyses of what enables successful practices at the local level. It will be based on the UNISDR DRR report, a first attempt to establish an evidence base from local data to inform decision-making, and can also serve as a basis for developing the HFA2 implementation plan at the local level after the WCDR3, which will serve as an evidence base for inclusion of a stronger “local government voice” in HFA2 and to serve as an inspiration on “how to do effective DRR” at the local level, as stakeholders consider means of strengthening implementation of HFA2.

¹ World Bank- Working paper 2009

Contents of the themed issue:

a) Local patterns of risks

Analysis of patterns of risks that local authorities are facing taking into account both intensive and extensive risks and its effects in a number of local areas. Further study of future exposures, assets at risks and sectors (transport, tourism etc.) to be affected most.

b) Local actions on DRR

Evidence of how local governments implement risk reduction actions and how these link to national government implementation of DRR initiatives. Elements of local disaster resilience and the links to a national DRR and resilience framework in particular links to local development issues

c) Central policies for enabling local DRR actions

Analysis of national policies enabling and empowering local actions on DRR. DRR governance including issues such as decentralization.

d) Local disaster resilience

Define resilience at local level from a disaster risk reduction perspective. Drivers of Local Level DRR and resilience – The enabling environment for local DRR and resilience, and can include issues such as leadership, financing, mandate, capacity, local risk patterns or social demand from citizens.

e) Sound practices of local DRR

Sound practices on DRR actions at the local level and what needs to be done to reduce future risks. Particular focus would be imparted on effective local level DRR actions related to priority for action 4² under the HFA³.

Special issue launch

This special issue will be launched at the UN World conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in Sendai City, Japan from 14 to 18 March 2015. UNISDR Chief Margareta Wahlström said: *“The 3rd World Conference provides us with a rare opportunity to forge universal agreement on how to build disaster resilience across all sectors of society. It is particularly important that we have a strong urban focus as we expect 75% of the world’s population to be living in towns and cities by 2050.”* It is the intention that this themed issue will contribute towards achieving this mission.

Best paper awards

Best Paper award - **“State of DRR at the Local Level”** with a certificate and a prize for the author(s) will be presented at the World Disaster Conference in Japan, March 2015. This Best Paper will be selected from among the shortlisted papers by the journal editorial board representative(s).

Important deadlines

- **1st July 2014** - Shortlisting of papers by chapter authors . Papers will cover the five specific topics of the DRR Report . Accordingly, chapter leads are requested to recommend up to 2 input papers from their area to be considered for inclusion in this themed issue:
- **7th July 2014** - Instructions to authors to be sent on required modifications and to submit the paper to the journal as per its guidelines
- **7th August 2014** - Receive full papers
- **8th August to 10th September** - Paper review process
- **by 15th September 2014** - Feedback to authors on any further modifications
- **by 30th September 2014** - Final submission of the paper to the journal
- **March 2015** - Special issue publication and free access

² Reduce the underlying risk factors

³ <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/framework/>

International Journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment (IJDRBE) and the UNISDR “Making Cities Resilient Campaign”

International journal of Disaster Resilience in the Built Environment is the leading academic journal to promote research and scholarly activity associated with the UNISDR “*Making Cities Resilient*” Campaign. In particular, it aims at developing the skills and knowledge of the built environment professions and will strengthen their capacity in strategic and practical aspects of disaster prevention, mitigation, response and reconstruction to mitigate the effects of disasters nationally and internationally. The journal publishes original and refereed material that contributes to the advancement of the research and practice, and provides contributing authors with an opportunity to disseminate their research and experience to a broad audience. It is indexed in prestigious indexing services including SCOPUS.

The Journal is edited by Professors Dilanthi Amaratunga & Richard Haigh from the Centre for Disaster Resilience, University of Salford, UK, which is a key partner of the UNISDR “*Making Cities Resilient*” Campaign. Please visit: www.emeraldinsight.com/ijdrbe.htm to read more about the Journal.

In launching this themed issue, free access to all the journal papers will be available to all the “*Making Cities Resilient*” Campaign stakeholders via the journal web site.