

# Northumbria Research Link

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Dealing with Disasters International  
Conference 2011  
*Reflections on Recent Disasters:  
The Last 10 Years*

University of Glamorgan 28<sup>th</sup> November

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# About the Conference Series

- DwD 2006 Teesside  
*Planning, Response and Investigation*
- DwD 2007 Northumbria  
*Resilience, Response and Investigation*
- DwD 2008 Glamorgan  
*Putting Resilience into Response*
- DwD 2009 Kathmandu  
*Resilience through Local Governance*
- DwD 2010 Northumbria  
*Linking Disasters and Development: the next 10 Years*
- DwD 2011 Glamorgan  
*Reflections on Recent Disasters: the past 10 Years*

# A question for this conference

What lessons can we learn from our experiences of the last decade of disasters that can be applied to promote resilience, optimise response to the event and to speed the recovery process and post event restoration?

# Some topics suggested

- *Environmental disasters and the findings from interventions*
- *Transport, industrial and other man-made disasters and the implications for planning*
- *Conflict as a disaster and the implications*
- *Risk, vulnerability, poverty and development: the inter-relationships*
- *Impacts of disasters on travel and tourism and ensuing mobilities*

# The Challenge

- Haiti, Pakistan, Somalia, Japan, Europe, Thailand .....
- Population, urbanisation, uneven development
- Extreme environmental and economic shocks
- Adaptation
- Communication
- Expectation

## Operational mechanisms in reacting to environmental shocks

Preventing and Preparing - Managing and Mitigating - Addressing the Effects

<i>i) Early warning engagement</i>	<i>ii) Reactions to risks</i>	<i>iii) Disaster communication</i>	<i>iv) Response standards</i>
<p>i.e. – Awareness that motivates escape.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participation through capacity to address environmental uncertainty.</li> <li>- Knowledge of when to react relative to changes in environmental risk, through risk assessment, early warning approaches and techniques.</li> </ul>	<p>i.e. - Interpretation of risks and their acceptability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resourcefulness of culturally derived reactions.</li> <li>- Ongoing risk assessment and management.</li> <li>- Formalised assistance reactions.</li> <li>- Sensitised risk governance.</li> </ul>	<p>i.e. - Communication that mediates impacts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grounded information flows between those experiencing, observing and transmitting.</li> <li>- Appropriate use of the media and communication technology.</li> <li>- Communicating past lessons to current circumstances.</li> </ul>	<p>i.e. - Applying minimum and extended standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriate management of emergency relief and recovery.</li> <li>- Longer-term recovery and rehabilitation.</li> <li>- Development oriented adaptation and disaster risk reduction through upholding rights.</li> <li>- Honouring pledges for reconstruction.</li> </ul>

## Reactions and policy rationales under varying conditions of certainty and potential impact

	Higher Potential Impact	Lower Potential Impact
Higher Certainty	<p><i>Characteristic Reaction:</i> Focus on short term and more visible impacts with limited investment in underlying vulnerability and development issues</p> <p><i>Policy Rationale:</i> Mitigate likely impacts, including for known vulnerable groups. Resilience building, wellbeing, poverty reduction and development progress as additional actions where feasible and with political will</p>	<p><i>Characteristic Reaction:</i> Moral and political awareness submerged. Low intervention investment accompanied by non-action for 'acceptable' risks of 'minority' concern</p> <p><i>Policy Rationale:</i> Use evidence base to reduce environmental threat, and negotiate longer-term adaptations, wellbeing or poverty reduction</p>
Lower Certainty	<p><i>Characteristic Reaction:</i> Lack of motivation and precautionary investment . Occasional miss-directed reactions due to uncertainty</p> <p><i>Policy Rationale:</i> Develop knowledge and understanding. Opportunity for diplomacy, rights and moralistic persuasion, with potential of political opportunism</p>	<p><i>Characteristic Reaction:</i> Slower onset and 'lower impact' crisis is considered status quo with acceptable levels of unknown risk</p> <p><i>Policy Rationale:</i> Concord with available knowledge and development broadly mindful of underlying condition.</p>



# Progress in dealing with disasters

More known about;

- Complex disasters
- Uncertainty
- Mitigation options

Less known about;

- Motivation
- Sustainability
- Wellbeing