



2nd African Regional Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction
Consultative Meeting

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Session 5: Knowledge, innovation and education for Disaster Risk Reduction

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Scope

1. Perspective
2. Where are we now?
3. Where are we going?
4. Where should we be going?
5. Challenges

Putting HFA3 in perspective

- Knowledge:
 - Facts, information and skills acquired by a person through experience and education.
- Education:
 - Process of giving or receiving systematic instruction.
- Training:
 - Teaching a person new skills or type of behaviour through practice and instruction over time.
- Innovation:
 - Creating new ideas, methods, products.

Where are we now with knowledge management?

- Various new knowledge is created by stays between experts.
- African experts enjoy limited recognition.
- Some great networking initiatives
 - AURAN, PeriPeri U, PHREE-WAY, GOLFRE etc.
- African universities helping African universities.
- Traditional knowledge recognised but not yet fully understood or incorporated.
- Uncoordinated information exchange.



Where are we now i.t.o education and training?

- Various schools programmes and interventions (e.g. ActionAid in Malawi).
- Proliferation of short courses.
- Under graduate courses in disaster and risk management.
- Incorporation of DRR focus in various disciplines (e.g. public health, geography, public management).
- Dedicated Masters programmes.
- One PhD programme (2010).

Where are we now i.t.o. research?

- Limited to a few universities (lack of culture of research).
- Event/discipline specific.
- Limited funding.
- One peer reviewed journal (Jamba - see www.acds.co.za).
- Multi-disciplinary research colloquiums (e.g. climate change and adaptation, food security, migration studies etc.).
- More and more M and PhD students!!



Where are we now i.t.o. public awareness?

- Communities are quite aware of their risk but need the correct “tools” to manage it.
- Limited to no utilisation of various media for DRR purposes.
- Limited community involvement.
- Some public awareness campaigns but the messages does not “stick”!

Where are we going with knowledge management?

- Must focus on national and regional needs.
- There is a will to translate high level knowledge into local “language”.
- Still a disconnect between what we understand at regional, sub-regional and national level of DRR and how this translates to community reality.

Where are we going with education and training?

- Multi-disciplinary focus on DRR
 - Studying of a topic in various disciplines.
 - e.g. Study of art - art techniques, history, development, anthropology.
 - Benefit largely within the base discipline.
 - Overflows disciplinary boundaries but goals remains discipline specific.
- Largely the current focus.

Where are we going with education and training?

- Inter-disciplinary
 - Transfer of methods from one discipline to another.
 - Degree of application (e.g. nano technology in textiles; political change analysis for vulnerability studies)
 - Epistemological degree (e.g. theory of philosophy in humanitarian relief management)
 - Degree of generating new disciplines (e.g. methods of mathematics transferred to social and economic science to create chaos theory)
 - Goals also remain within discipline.

Where are we going with research?

- Dominated by “how richer nations feel”.
 - e.g. climate change and adaptation.
- New innovative research ideas.
- Multi- and inter-disciplinary.
- Numerous young researchers emerging.
- Various research institutions.
- Not enough support/funding.

Where should we be going with knowledge management?

- Capture and understand IK and cultural heritage.
- Should not see IK as overall “wrapper” for making outside specialist knowledge understandable.
 - We need a hybrid approach.
- Need to make information relevant for local conditions.
 - e.g. Views from the Frontline findings
- Decentralised support.

Where should we be going with education and training?

- School-centered with community involvement
 - New syllabus or colourful booklet not enough!
- Trans-disciplinary
 - Move from Mode 1 to Mode 2 knowledge
 - Mode 1 = traditional discipline knowledge
 - Mode 2 = new, radical, unconventional, fast changing knowledge (cutting across various disciplines)
 - e.g. defining our social life in terms of cyber-space.
 - Modern changing societies need relevant knowledge.

Where should we be going with research?

- Use of PAR methods!!
- Globally innovative but locally relevant.
- Trans-disciplinary.
- Integration/mainstreaming issues (limited funding addresses multiple issues)
- Research should support local as well as national DRR challenges.
- “Pushing the envelope”
- Create a culture of research in our institutions.



Challenges

- DRR as a “discipline”
- High level skills creation (at universities and professionals).
- Teacher training and support.
- Integration of various forms of knowledge.
- Integration of disaster risk into traditional disciplines.
- Common research agenda.
- Finding a common “language”.

Challenges

- Accompanied by adequate funding.
- Longitudinal studies of risk and vulnerability in communities.
- “New” type of researcher/lecturer.
- The notions of multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary research and knowledge creation.
- Most importantly = how do we translate knowledge, innovation and education to address local realities?



Thank You



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