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