



Introduction to the UK Disaster Education Seminar Series

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Background Rationale

- Consolidated awareness of the need for local resilience to local and global threats. This can be built upon.

‘Frequent disaster events and their interrelationship with ongoing development issues require in depth reanalyses of how they are addressed by the current education system.’

‘The UK experienced its most severe flooding for decades in 2007, inflicting estimated costs of well over three billion pounds. The likely influence of climate change in exacerbating the frequency and intensity of some environmental disaster events, particularly those relating to drought, flood, sea level rise and extreme storms is also leaving many societies more anxious about the future.’

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Background Rationale

- Bombings, numerous political-economic instabilities, wars.
- Disease epidemics, such as those threatened by Avian Flu, have heightened the sense of uncertainty as to when, where and upon whom, disasters will impact the most, and what level and type of preparedness action can and should be implemented.

A moral imperative that the young are informed and assisted to understand disaster, as part of their development.

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Background Rationale

- School education is a means to community education for preparedness and response

‘school education, coupled with self, family and community education, can help a student to develop a "culture of disaster preparedness", which, in turn, provides them with a guiding framework within which they are able to act as responsible adults. However, to date, most studies of disaster education have been conducted outside the UK, and mainly in relation to earthquake education. Those studies that have been carried out in the UK, have typically been limited to school security, school trips and fire safety, rather than 'disaster education' per se.

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Objectives of the Series

- To explore how knowledge, innovation and education can help build a culture of safety and resilience in the UK.

‘It is intended that strengthening the debate and practical ways forward for disaster education in schools will help in the quest for community based evaluation of solutions to hazards and vulnerabilities. This will in turn contribute to encouraging the engagement of all of society in disaster risk reduction.’

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Objectives of the Series

- To contribute towards addressing many of the important conceptual, practical and policy issues surrounding disaster education in the UK

Summary:

- i) Explore conceptual challenges of disaster education
- ii) Build an inter-disciplinary network of academics and practitioners
- iii) Identify disaster education policy options in the UK

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Approach

- bring together emergency management specialists, the school education sector, and academics
- Explore and learn from resonance with other parts of the world – link activities internationally

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Approach

The series will provide a flexible forum within which key user groups can identify both their own needs, as well as possible methods of advancing a people-centred approach to disaster reduction within the framework of the Civil Contingencies Act. It will contribute to the development of new theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of disaster reduction, engaging those with an interest in school-based disasters education from the worlds of academia, policy making and practice. This will be centred around the common goal of establishing what an appropriate programme might look like.

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Background to the Series

- Learning in Disaster and Development
 - Some Events: 'Disaster Management and Sustainable Development, Beyond the Academy, UK – Japan Disaster Risk Reduction Programme (DDC – DPRJ link), IDRiM (CasFiCa), other DDC projects, including refugee and asylum seekers integrations projects (CfBT, NFER, Home Office).
- Three earlier UK Seminars
- Multiple work of partner institutions
- Policy Context
 - Hyogo Accord
 - Civil Contingencies Act
 - School specific initiatives of UN institutions (i.e. UNISDR, UNESCO and others) and NGOs internationally

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Some Questions

- What is the pedagogy of disaster in the UK?
- What can be learnt and taught in an educational environment?
- What is the prospect for social learning in relation to state, private, corporate and individual responsibilities to disaster risk reduction?
- With regard to disaster education in the community, how do children engage community risk awareness?
- What are the opportunities for adapting school curricula to disaster prevention and response, and what are the boundaries of this topic for UK schools?

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Some Questions

- Which practical aspects of the education process can be incorporated into the learning experience and how might these be facilitated?
- To what extent is there an endogenous UK disaster experience that might form the mainstay of UK disaster education, and what knowledge, innovation and educational experiences should be imported from other parts of the world and other cultures?
- What is multicultural disasters education, and how might it be applied in the UK education system in the interests of wider issues (i.e. such as future conflict avoidance within and between communities)?

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Some issues from previous series

- Academic achievement vs. disaster education
- Addressing both policy and practice aspects of disaster education
- Academic curriculum vs. people's sense of value in addressing disaster risks.

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Series Outputs

- A summary document will be produced from each seminar which will contribute to an overall working paper for the series.
- This is likely to be developed into a book over the longer time frame.
- It is likely that some of the material will also enter the public domain via conventional journal papers.

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Key Seminar Dates

- 3rd March, 2009 Newcastle
- 31st March, 2009 Edinburgh
- 30th June, 2009 Cardiff
- 4th October, 2009 Manchester
- 1st December, 2009 Belfast
- 16th February, 2010 London

An additional date:

Dealing with Disasters 2009: 'Resilience through local governance', Kathmandu. November 12th – 13th. One strand of five is Disaster Education.

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