

**Second Japan – UK Seminar on Disaster Risk Management:
Disaster Mitigation for Sustainable Development
16th – 19th January 2007
Kyoto, Japan**

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Introduction

Japan is situated at a point where three tectonic plates meet and the resultant fault lines have the potential to cause earthquakes, as seen in Kobe 1995. In addition there are 80 active volcanoes and the threat of monsoons, typhoons and Tsunamis. With a changing environmental and political climate the UK has experienced floods and terrorist atrocities and is currently living with an increased threat in both areas. Consequently both nations have disaster management and risk reduction very high on the agenda. It is therefore understandable that the two nations would have scope for collaboration and information sharing.

During the 16th to the 19th January 2007 a delegation from the North East, an area of the UK with strong and established business links with Japan, participated in “The Second Joint Japan and UK Seminar on Disaster Risk Management and Disaster Mitigation for Sustainable Development” held in Kyoto, Japan. The group consisting of representatives from Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (TWFR) and Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) presented and discussed topics such as business continuity, disaster education, climate change and how the New Dimension programme has enhanced operational preparedness, resilience and response for flooding and Urban Search and Rescue in the North East of England.

The seminar was part of a collaboration between Northumbria University and Kyoto University. The main aim was to bring together disaster risk management academics, emergency management practitioners and policy makers from Japan and the UK, to exchange and share knowledge and information on disaster management, based on the two countries’ experiences. The seminar would also provide an environment where the format of future collaboration could be discussed and agreed

Background

On the 19th and 20th January, 2006, one year after the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in the Japanese City of Kobe, a Japanese and UK group came together for the first joint seminar at Newcastle’s Northumbria University. The aim was to address disaster risk reduction and education challenges faced by the two countries. The event of 2006 was funded by the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation and supported by the City of Newcastle and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS), with visits to the Service’s new community fire stations. The event’s success, along with growing academic interest in the area of disaster reduction and education, led to a proposal that such an event should be repeated the following year at Kyoto University in Japan.

The Great Britain Sasakawa Foundation, the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation, and British Embassy Tokyo Global Opportunities Fund agreed to provide all the funding for this second seminar.

As well as practitioners from TWFRS and NFRS the second event was carried out in association with the heads of Newcastle City Council, the City of Kyoto chamber of Commerce and Kyoto City Fire Department, together with leading academics from Northumbria and Kyoto Universities.

The second seminar was also an opportunity for the Disaster and Development Centre (DDC), Northumbria University and the Disaster Prevention Research Institute (DPRI), Kyoto University would progress, establishing a Japan and UK Disaster Risk Reduction Study Centre within their two institutions.

16th-19th January 2007 Japan

The seminar began in earnest on Tuesday 16th with a meeting between The Vice Chancellor of Northumbria University, the Kyoto University Vice President of Research and Finance, the Vice President of International Relations and the Director of International Relations, to discuss a memorandum of understanding between Kyoto and Northumbria Universities.

The meeting was followed by an extremely productive three-day programme;

- Day one: an Academic Forum
- Day two: a tour of Kobe City and Osaka Business Forum
- Day three: a Kyoto Policy and Practice Forum with senior fire officers at Kyoto City Government

Each event involved a series of presentations and debate.

The Academic Forum consisted of 20 presentations and speeches by senior academics of the two Universities and dignitaries from public sector institutions, including the Leader of Newcastle City Council, Senior representatives from TWFRS, The Vice Chancellor of Northumbria University, The Dean of the School of Applied Sciences at Northumbria, Directors of the DPRI and DDC, The Mayor of Kusatsu City Government, The Chief Emergency Planning Officer of TWFRS and emergency planning officers from Hounslow Council, London. The seminar was also attended by other members of Kyoto University staff and postgraduate students and City Government Officials.

The morning session of the forum included presentations relating to the effects of climate change, with emphasis on flood and drought risks in the world, humanitarian aid in the 21st Century and Local Governance and Resilience in the UK. The afternoon session involved theoretical discussion of sustainable disaster reduction, followed by how disaster reduction policies

could be implemented. This included presentations regarding New Dimension, the Civil Contingencies Act and pandemic flu management in the urban development.

The Kobe Tour and Business Forum included a visit to the Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution (DRI) in Kobe where the delegation were presented with an earthquake simulation and filmed account of The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995, which caused the death of 6,334 people and the widespread destruction of Kobe.

The Business Forum was hosted by Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI). Presentations were made by Northumbria University, OCCI, Newcastle City Council, Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit, NFRS, Osaka City Emergency Management Office and DPRI. The main areas covered were the promotion of business continuity and how it can act as a catalyst for community resilience, with input on how the New Dimension High Volume Pumps are part of business continuity.

The Policy and Practice Forum at the Fire Department, Kyoto City Council consisted of eight presentations including speeches from the Vice Chancellor of Northumbria University and the Chief of Kyoto Fire Department. Presentations were made by the Kyoto Fire Department Citizen Safety Section concerning Disaster Action planning and damage prediction. The Leader of Newcastle City Council spoke of a 'resilient Newcastle'. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer of NFRS and the two officers from TWFRS presented and discussed how New Dimension had enhanced the Fire and Rescue Service's capability and resilience for disasters and Emergency Planning Officers from Hounslow Council in London discussed Urban Emergency Management.

The delegates also attended a number of receptions. These were hosted by the Organising Committee of the DPRI. The first followed the academic forum at which seven Kyoto City Government Officials were present and at which the Leader of Newcastle City Council presented a Newcastle City Shield to the Leader of the Kyoto City group. A further reception was hosted by the British Consulate-General at Osaka on the evening of the third day of the seminar. This reception was attended by academics and practitioners working in related fields and served as an opportunity to share information and network. Speeches were delivered by the representative of the British Consulate-General, Vice Chancellor of Northumbria University and the Counsellor of Science and Innovation of the British Embassy in Tokyo. The Vice Chancellor presented on the strengths and opportunities of Northumbria University and the British Embassy on their current Science and Innovation Programme, highlighting opportunities for potential funding proposals and involvement in lead Japan/UK events.

Findings

Participants generally commented that the seminar offered outstanding opportunity for comparing theory, policy and practice in the two parts of the world, with the potential to use this event to progress the subject and UK interaction with Japan in a unique way. It was felt that beyond the theoretical and practice based developments there was also much to be learned by addressing disaster reduction from the perspectives of the distinct cultures of these two nations. A further observation was that such an event also helped to consolidate and create new working relations and opportunities for collaboration, within and between the UK group institutions. It was agreed that better risk reduction requires good collaborative working and investment.

It was felt that a subsequently formed steering group should focus their attention on a clearly defined theme that captured the essence of the collaboration. Based on the content of presentations, speeches, debate in sessions and conversation in the more informal parts of the event it was suggested that the focus of this link would be **'Implementing Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan and the UK'**. This would be a suitably generic overall title for the project within which a number of specific activities would fit, including those associated with emergency preparedness and response, business continuity, disaster education, and climate change.

It was thought that the practical application of an implementation science approach could be progressed by a concept and network of activity called 'Case Station Field Campus', which was launched by Professor Norio Okada at the UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction (2005). An event at which both DPRI and DDC were accredited members. A finding of the discussions with DPRI at the Kyoto Seminar was that it would be possible to indicate one or more of the implementing institutions in the North East of England as a Case Station. This would join several others that are now identified in other parts of the world. A Case Station is a way of maintaining ongoing monitoring of practice activities in a learning by doing approach, which would be linked to Northumbria University and the wider network around the world. There are currently no Case Stations in the UK. Setting one up would draw yet further focus to disaster and development centred activity in the North East and provide a further component of a proposed Japan and UK Disaster Risk Reduction Study Programme or Centre. A process of visiting scholars between the two universities has already commenced. This includes PhD research and practitioner engagement. Indeed following the seminar a representative from TWFRS remained for an additional week based at Kyoto University, carrying out research into Disaster preparedness and community response and education.

A number of further findings from the seminar relate to a number of follow up action points to be progressed by the steering group. Amongst these is the inclusion of a Japan and UK disaster reduction session in the annual conference on Dealing with Disasters organised by Northumbria University's School of Applied Sciences and DDC to be held in September 2007.

It was evident that a number of other projects could be developed through the collaboration, variously addressing emergency preparedness and response, business continuity, disaster education, and climate change. A number of other existing projects at DDC would be supportive of the North East England end of this work. These are recent, current or forthcoming projects variously focussing on resilience, displacement and community participation.

Conclusion

The event was well received and very successful in meeting its prime objective to further consolidate the Kyoto and Newcastle disaster management and risk reduction link. For the representatives of TWFR and NFRS the event was an invaluable experience and opportunity to information share and interact with academics and policy makers from the two nations. For the Universities the Memorandum of Understanding is now at an advanced stage of completion in Kyoto. The UK end of the collaboration has agreed to form a Steering Group to progress the initiative. Various communications to relevant bodies will be taking place in the wake of the seminar to seek funding that would support the project and it will be crucial to identify individuals who will be engaged in carrying out its co-ordination. This is currently being examined by Northumbria University. The Director of DDC will set objectives and activities of the programme in liaison with the Steering Group and delegate project deliverables to a Project Co-ordinator. The Project Co-ordinator will monitor progress on outputs of project activities and lead some of the individual activity areas (such as for example the September Dealing with Disaster Conference session, climate change initiative or other projects). This role will be to ensure that objectives are met, in liaison with the Director of DDC. The steering group will contribute to individual activity areas as part of particular groups with support from member's organisations. This strategy is intended to keep the concept behind the seminars alive and moving forward. In this way future collaboration can be secured and the subject area of Risk Management and Reduction can be explored further with benefits not only for the UK and Japan but for all countries which are subject to disasters.