

InnovationLab

Further your understanding of disaster risk



GLOBAL FACILITY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION AND RECOVERY **GFDRR**

Understanding Risk

A disaster risk assessment community

Understanding Risk (UR) is the leading platform for disaster risk assessment experts and practitioners. With a diverse membership of 3,300+ representatives from government, the private sector, multilateral institutions, non-profit organizations, civil society and academic institutions, UR promotes:

- ▶ Collaboration and partnership-building
- ▶ Knowledge exchange and sharing of best practices
- ▶ Innovation and the latest advances in the field

Promoting nontraditional partnerships

To encourage collaboration and promote innovation, global UR Forums are held every two years in different regions, alternatively between developed and developing countries.

Forums are designed to facilitate nontraditional partnerships by convening a diverse group of participants from different sectors and regions of the world. For example, UR connects scientists with local disaster risk management agencies to enable dialogue and improve the understanding of on-the-ground needs.

Organized in a collaborative spirit and engaging multiple individuals and organizations, UR forums are free and open to anyone passionate about disaster risk assessment.

Expanding the Community

The UR community has grown from 700 members in 2009 to more than 3,300 members today. To meet the increasing demand for UR conferences, a spin off UR+ event was created.

UR+ enables municipal, national, and regional stakeholders to hold forums that are relevant to their local disaster risk landscape. Brazil hosted the first national UR+ in 2012 with Haiti following in its footsteps in 2014.

The first regional UR+ event will be held in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on risk assessment and disaster risk financing and insurance.

UR2014

The most recent global forum in London in July 2014 attracted over 800 risk assessment experts and practitioners from 60 countries representing 285 institutions. The forum's theme, "Producing Actionable Information," sought to ensure that risk information is accessible and understandable leading to more informed decision making.

Building technical capacity

At UR Forums, partners have the opportunity to hold side meetings and training events.

For instance, the Open Data for Resilience Initiative (OpenDRI) organizes hands-on technical training events on the latest open-source tools and methodologies such as OpenStreetMap (an open-license map of the world), GeoNode (an open data platform that better enables sharing of geospatial information) and InaSAFE (a disaster impact scenario tool).

"I really valued the opportunity to participate in UR2014, both as a presenter and as an observer. I met people who are engaged in different countries from a wide range of disciplines. Each of them holds a piece of the puzzle that will create the global solutions we are looking for in understanding and managing risk as part of building resilience."



— Lianne Dalziel, Mayor of Christchurch, New Zealand



Case study

Connecting partners

Photo: Members of the Open Cities team in Kathmandu, Nepal during community mapping activities.
Photo credit: Kathmandu Living Labs.

As a result of an OpenDRI training held at the 2012 Cape Town UR Forum, the Government of Nepal implemented a project in the Kathmandu Valley that made use of participatory mapping techniques.

To build seismic resilience in the Kathmandu Valley's education and health infrastructure, a disaster risk model was created to determine the relative vulnerability of schools and health facilities. Part of the project required better information about the location and physical structure of these public buildings.

A team of community mappers, trained by GFDRR staff and consultants, mapped and documented building attributes of over 2,250 schools and 350 health facilities. Further, over 2,300 individuals from universities, technical communities, and government took part in trainings and presentations during the first year of the project.

The data have been used in plans to retrofit schools and health facilities and in applications for transportation planning; moreover, USAID has incorporated the data into disaster preparedness planning exercises. The community mapping work of this project and others like it has been documented in the GFDRR- and World Bank-funded publication Planning an Open Cities Project (available at www.gfdr.org/innovation-lab).

① More info at www.understandrisk.org



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