

# 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 6,300+ 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.

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 6,300 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. In 2015, the first UR+ regional event was held in Addis Abba, Ethiopia, with a focus on risk assessment and disaster risk financing and insurance in Sub-Saharan Africa. Other UR+ plus events have been held in Austria in 2016, in Colorado in 2015, in Haiti in 2014, and in Brazil in 2012.

### 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.

The next global UR Forum will be held in Venice, Italy from May 16 - 20, 2016 under the theme, "Building Evidence for Action."

### 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

# Mapping Risk to Build Resilience in Nepal

**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 GFDRR and World Bank-supported Open Cities project in the Kathmandu Valley to build seismic resilience.

This project made use of participatory mapping techniques and created a disaster risk model to determine the relative vulnerability of school and health facility infrastructure in the Kathmandu Valley. As part of the project, a team of community mappers, trained by GFDRR, mapped and documented over 2,250 schools and 350 health facilities. Additionally, over 2,300 people from universities, technical communities, and government were trained in digital mapping techniques during the project's first year.

After two high-magnitude earthquakes struck the Kathmandu Valley in April and May 2015, data from this project proved crucial to help inform response and recovery efforts. The information collected was used by the Nepal military, the Red Cross, and other organizations to provide on-the-ground assistance.

In addition, USAID has incorporated the data into its disaster preparedness planning exercises. Data from the project has also been used in plans to retrofit schools and health facilities, and in applications for transportation planning.

**i** More info at [www.understandrisk.org](http://www.understandrisk.org)



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