



Left: Flooding in European City



Right: Ismailpuram Housing scheme, Sri Lanka



Android by name, human by nature

At the very heart of the Centre for Disaster Resilience's research is the protection and survival of people; people that are caught in natural or manmade disasters.

CDR's research focuses on their survival, rebuilding and regrowth of their societies. Their latest project is called ANDROID and CDR are the lead partner of this new global inter-disciplinary consortium that seeks to promote co-operation and innovation, and increase society's resilience to disasters of human and natural origin.

Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga and Dr Richard Haigh have secured an initial three year grant, worth 790 513€, to establish the Academic Network for Disaster Resilience to Optimise educational Development (ANDROID). The grant has been obtained from the EU Life Long Learning programme, under the Erasmus networks action. ANDROID brings together inter-disciplinary scientists and inter-sectorial partners based at European higher education institutes, local and national government, and international organisations. The partners, numbering sixty seven at the network's inception, will work together to deliver a challenging programme of activities. The network has representatives from thirty one countries, twenty eight in the EU, as well as organisations from Australia, Canada and Sri Lanka.

Giving some background to the project Richard said: "ANDROID is concerned with what resilience is, what it means to society, and how society might achieve greater resilience in the face of increasing threats from natural and human induced hazards. The term resilience has been widely adopted in research, policy and practice to describe the way in which they would like to reduce society's susceptibility to the threat posed by hazards. Resilience has also been used freely across a range of academic disciplines, including materials, ecology, economics and sociology. Increasingly people are aware that while change is sometimes gradual and that things can move forward in continuous and predictable ways, change can also be sudden, disorganising and turbulent. Resilience provides better understanding of how society should respond to disruptive events and accommodate change. The complex nature of disasters has led to recognition that risk reduction through increased resilience will require a strategy that is inter-disciplinary. True inter-disciplinary only occurs where a number of separate disciplines surrender their own concepts and goals, and collectively define themselves by reference to a common set of strategic concepts and goals. This network will help us to understand the attributes that enable physical, socio-cultural, politico-economic and natural systems to adapt, by resistance or changing, in order to reach and maintain an acceptable level of functioning".

In order to achieve this aim, the network will promote discourse among European applied, human, social and natural scientists to, pool their results and findings, discuss methods and develop inter-disciplinary explanations that increase society's resilience to disasters. The partners will also seek to describe, analyse, and compare the capacity of European cities and higher education to address disaster risk, and thereby reinforce the link between education and society. Ultimately Dilanthi and Richard expect that the network will build the capacity of higher education to address emerging challenges in disaster resilience, strengthen the link between research and teaching, and inform policy development.

The network has set itself challenging, but necessary outcomes, during this ambitious work programme set out over three years. At its heart a virtual network platform will be developed to help manage and coordinate partners. The network will undertake a number of survey exercises aimed at capturing and sharing innovative approaches to inter-disciplinary working, surveying European education to map programmes in disaster resilience, and analyse the capacity of European public administrators to address disaster risk. Special interest groups will be established to address emerging concerns, while an inter-disciplinary doctoral school will help to develop the long term capacity of society to address them. Research and teaching resources that are developing through such activities will be hosted as open education resources, making them freely available outside the network.

Although the network is Euro-centric in its partnership, Dilanthi and Richard were also able to secure funding for three 'third country' partners; RMIT University Australia, University of Moratuwa Sri Lanka and University of Calgary Canada, to join the research, thereby enabling the network to develop strategic linkages outside the EU. Longer term, ANDROID's leaders hope that the network proves to be sufficiently valuable to its members and society, that it can be sustained beyond the initial three year plan. Major network meetings that bring all the partners together will be held annually, with the third meeting scheduled to take place as a major International Conference on Building Resilience, to be hosted by the University of Salford in 2014.

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Campaign partnership continues

The Centre for Disaster Resilience has been invited to continue as a formal academic partner of the "Making Cities Resilient: My City is getting ready!" campaign. The mandate of this campaign has been extended until 2015 and the Centre has also been invited to shape the next phase of the campaign 2012-2015.

The mandate of the United Nations secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) is to serve as the focal point in the United Nations system for the coordination of disaster reduction and to ensure synergies among the disaster reduction activities of the United Nations system regional organisations and activities in socio-economic and humanitarian fields. In 2010, UNISDR launched the World Disaster Reduction campaign on Making Cities Resilient, which aims at raising political commitment to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation among local governments and mayors and promotes the principle of sustainable urbanisations. The campaign seeks to raise awareness and effect change by urging local governments to take immediate action, and to build multi-stakeholder partnerships to achieve the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action at the local

level, by working together with local organisations, grass root networks, private sector and national authorities.

Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga, lead of CDR, said of the campaign: "The goal of the Making Cities Resilient campaign is to increase substantially the number of cities and local governments who are aware and taking action to reduce disaster risk; as well as to raise the profile of local governments in their risk reduction, preparedness and recovery efforts. This can be achieved through building long-lasting partnerships. CDR has agreed to continue as an official campaign partner and to: support, within our possibilities, the Making Cities Resilient campaign in 2012-2015 as an organisation; promote the objectives and principles of the campaign throughout 2012 – 2015; share relevant experiences and technical information related to all aspects of urban resilience and

participate in national, regional and global forums in support of the campaign".

The Centre is offering its support to the Sri Lankan Ministry of Disaster Management with a view to incorporating the outcomes of the International Conference on Building Resilience in the local government joint action plan to tackle hazard risk in Sri Lanka, which was launched in July 2011. The plan identifies key priority activities that follow the 'Ten Essentials' of the 'Making Cities Resilient' campaign. The action plan will be implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Disaster Management and the Ministry of Local Government & Provincial Council in December 2011. This event will be used to convene platforms or task forces for collaboration in the regions of Sri Lanka.

Reporting the facts

The expertise of the Centre for Disaster Resilience (CDR) is consulted worldwide and their reputation as academic partners is strong and trusted.

Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga and Dr Richard Haigh are Advisory Panel members of the 'Making Cities Resilient Campaign' (see article above) with CDR contributing as one of the main global partners in the campaign, representing academic, technical and expert institutions, and also contributing towards the campaigns overall goal to empower local governments with stronger national policies to invest in risk reduction at local level, as part of urban and regional development plans by working with them closely.

Now available through the Centre is a brief which summarises key activities that have been carried out by the Salford team in contributing towards the Resilient Cities Campaign.

Downloadable copies of the report will be available on the website from end of November 2011 at www.disaster-resilience.salford.ac.uk or you can contact Dilanthi and Richard directly to receive a copy of the report.

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