

Call for Papers: ensuring accountability in disaster management

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Call for Papers: Ensuring Accountability in Disaster Risk Management and Reconstruction

Global Disaster Resilience to partner with many international collaborators in organizing a workshop on “**Ensuring Accountability in Disaster Risk Management and Reconstruction**”

Disasters due to natural hazards are becoming more frequent and more devastating in almost all parts of the world. This situation calls for better disaster preparedness and greater readiness to minimize adverse impacts of disasters. Once a disaster strikes, the prudent management of its aftermath can facilitate quicker recovery and restoration of normal life for the affected individuals and communities. Yet, all these depend on the actions of many stakeholders such as governments, various state institutions, national and international non-governmental organizations, private businesses and community groups. On the other hand, actual outcomes of various interventions depend on a range of factors such as resources, planning, coordination, quality control and monitoring. So, the life chances of potential and actual disaster victims depend on the performance of a whole range of institutions.

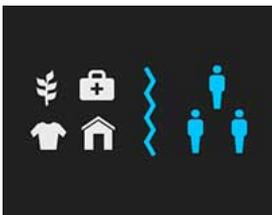
An important question that arises is how we could optimize performance of key stakeholders. In this regard, institutionalizing effective accountability mechanisms appears to be the way forward. The accountability mechanisms are supposed to play a key role in different phases of disaster management cycle: response, recovery, rehabilitation, reconstruction, prevention, mitigation and preparedness. The absence of such mechanisms has reduced the effectiveness of interventions in many situations.

As is well known, accountability is an integral aspect of good governance. Yet, in many countries accountability rarely goes beyond financial accountability. While financial accountability is important to eliminate corruption and wastage of public resources, and ensure that benefits reach the intended target groups, the measures of financial accountability do not go far enough to ensure the satisfaction of the needs of disaster victims, both potential and actual. Some critics claim (Bakers, 2014) that the failure of accountability in collaborative working (collaborative accountability) is caused by the lack of communication. Others have stated that accountability cannot meet the criteria that have been set such as vertical and horizontal accountability and social accountability to the victims and civil society organizations (Taylor, et. al., 2014). It is this reality that calls for an enlargement of the scope of accountability to include the concerns of the beneficiaries. In general, what is necessary is develop bottom up accountability tools in order to measure the actual impact of external interventions in terms of their outcomes on the ground.

Any investigation of the outcomes of external interventions following a disaster would reveal the nature and extent of recovery in terms of relief, resettlement, livelihood, community building, access to services, etc. According to new Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, it is also important to look at related accountability issues within the pre-disaster phase, as there is more emphasis now on disaster risk reduction, and what we could do to prevent disasters and/ or to minimize losses. As highlighted in the Sendai Framework “Words into Action” accountability in disaster risk reduction is intended to enable scrutiny and understanding of actions taken at different levels, and of those responsible for such actions. Article 19(e) of the Sendai Framework articulates the principle that disaster risk reduction depends on coordination mechanisms within and across sectors, full engagement and clear responsibilities of all State institutions and stakeholders, to ensure mutual accountability

Many shortcomings that may be present might have been avoided if there were effective accountability mechanisms built into the intervention program. Moreover, a comprehensive social audit following the implementation of an intervention program could help rectify weaknesses of an intervention provided such a mechanism was built into the disaster management plan of a government or any other institution.

It is against the above background that we will organize a workshop in December 2015 in Colombo, Sri Lanka with the participation of disaster risk management experts and state and non-state stakeholders to deliberate on and develop a possible framework for social accountability to be considered for inclusion in a national disaster management plan.



For more information, visit: <http://www.disaster-resilience.net/accountability/> (<http://www.disaster-resilience.net/accountability/>)

You can download the call for papers here (</media/universityofhuddersfield/content2013/schools/artdesignandarchitecture/images/research/gdrc/news/2015-16/accountability.pdf>)

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