

EERI-NSF Rapid and Research Needs Workshop

Breakout Session Title: Community Participation and Education

Discussion Leaders and Recorders: David McEntire and Liesel Ritchie

Panel Members: Sean Gulick, Jane Harrison, Stephanie Lansing, Kevin Meehan, Mimi Sheller

Session Overview: Community participation and education are generally viewed as having positive impacts upon all types of emergency management activities. While scholars have examined divergent preparedness measures before disasters as well as emergent behavior during the crisis phase of emergency management, less is known about the best methods for including scholars, citizens and NGOs in academic research. In addition, there is insufficient knowledge about the best practices regarding community disaster education and training. The 2010 Haiti earthquake is a unique case to evaluate how to most effectively design community participation and education programs and evaluate their influence in both the disaster and development realms. In this sense, one scholar's broader impact is another scholar's research topic. Further studies are therefore required in four major areas:

Involvement of Haitian researchers in academic research

- Where are Haitian intellectuals currently getting their advanced education? Are they acquiring education domestically or abroad? What are the implications of either internal or external education for future research?
- What are the extant academic interests and capacities of researchers in Haiti? How has the earthquake altered or focused Haitian research capabilities and priorities?
- What is the existing extension/outreach organizational structure in Haiti?
- How to promote the participation of Haitian faculty and students in research in Haiti? What grant structures and investigative processes are most likely to promote cross-cultural research?
- What are the most effective models of engaging in interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research in Haiti? How can U.S. researchers most effectively span the gaps that separate disciplines and nations?

Inclusion of Haitian citizens in academic research

- What local (Haitian-led) organizations are operating currently in the country? Who are the formal and informal community leaders? What opportunities are available to harness these organizations and their leaders and members for scientific purposes?
- What are common barriers to and facilitators of community participation in research?
- What types of participatory processes do local Haitians use in daily-routine or disaster situations?
- What types of incentives (e.g., work, cell phone minutes, money) are most apt to generate involvement of citizens in studies while also motivating changes in behavior?

Participation of foreign NGOs in academic research

- What NGOs operate in Haiti (before, during and after the disaster)? How do their various roles relate to hazards and emergency management?

- How can the international humanitarian community assess current community assets? How can these internal and external resources be utilized and linked to better deal with disasters and improve prospects for development?
- How can NSF and EERI research inform and educate the practices of international NGOs? Can a mechanism (such as a database equivalent to Relief Web) be established to share cutting edge knowledge across relevant research networks?

Impact of education and training

- What are the general barriers to and facilitators of community education? What are the impacts of education and training in building emergency management capacity and in fostering community disaster participation?
- What are the consequences of the disaster on the educational system in Haiti? For instance, how has the Haitian diaspora shaped community education and/or participation?
- How can scholars use schools (at all levels) as a resource to identify and frame research questions in Haiti? What can be done to ensure education and research takes into account appropriate technologies for Haiti?
- What are the appropriate undergraduate and graduate programs that need to be developed in Haiti? What are the gaps and critical education needs?
- If you build educational capacity in rural areas, will it stop brain drain? Can investments in education result in a “reverse flow?” If so, how?
- What are the most effective media formats and technologies for information dissemination and community education? How can participation be promoted through education and training?