

EERI-NSF Rapid and Research Needs Workshop

Breakout Session Title: Social Science II

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Panel Members: Tricia Wachtendorf, University of Delaware; Alka Sapat, Florida Atlantic University; Justin Yates, Texas A&M University; Jun Zhuang, SUNY Buffalo

Session Overview: An effective process of disaster preparedness, response, and recovery requires engaging the full potential of human and capital resources that the impacted society could provide. It means integrating/articulating the different layers of outside assistance with the local resources in a way that both minimizes the human, social, and economic impacts of the disaster, and sets the affected population on a path to sustained recovery. Achieving this goal necessitates a thorough understanding of the various technical, organizational, and cultural components of the disaster-affected society, as well as the functions of its key systems relevant to disaster preparedness, response and recovery. Conversely, it means understanding what mechanisms the outside world could use to foster recovery. Further studies are therefore required in four major areas:

Systems approach: subsystems and sub-subsystems

- Approach the problem from a systemic perspective, acknowledging the existence of subsystems, multiple aid/human networks that at times compete, collaborate, or interfere with each other, in trying to help disaster victims
- Investigate the best use of these components as part of a comprehensive disaster preparedness, response, and recovery strategy
- Analyze multi-level networks engaged in humanitarian assistance, with their multiple levels of interdependencies and disconnects
 - Examine possible means of articulating /integrating external aid networks to the various levels of local networks
 - Assess different modes of managing competition among networks of humanitarian assistance, including the design of incentives/penalties to lead the entire system to a higher level of performance
 - Investigate methods of building local capacity, acknowledging the possibility that international aid could disrupt local capacity
 - Examine the impact of international assistance on local Health services capacity and the extent to which it was adversely affected by international aid

Explore alternative modes of building local capacity in an environment that does not have basic sets of skills, or organizational, institutional capacity

- Assistance: examine how to use international resources effectively; that is, how to deliver resources in a context without basic organizational capacity for public institutions, but engender public support for institutions in the process
- Resilience: investigate how to build resilience and long-term sustainability

Information systems; what are the feedforward and feedback processes that drive the learning processes of the society?

- What uses of information technology can be developed to build capacity within a disaster preparedness, response, and recovery system?
- How can information systems be used to link international, national, and local networks of action?

Alternative data collection methods and approaches: use of participatory action research

How can local participation be integrated into research efforts? What means can be used effectively to engage emerging leaders in local organizations, universities, and agencies in monitoring and managing risk?