

The Role of Climate Change Related Risk Perceptions in Designing and Enhancing DRR and CCA Policies, Strategies, Tools and Methods

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Increasing Resiliency Against Climate Change Impacts And Disaster Risk.

Abstract text

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How communities in the Pacific perceive, relate and make decisions with respect to climate change associated risk and disasters is lacking in the Pacific. Social perceptions of risk that shape behaviour have been studied from different perspectives. It has been found that there are distinct factors, which can influence and determine risk perceptions and the decision making that shape behaviour change. It is therefore equally important to understand these local perceptions in order to better design effective and resilient disaster risk and climate change adaptation policies, strategies tools and methods.

We therefore set out to explore the issue through a multi-country research and capacity building initiative in the Pacific. Phase one is data collection through focus group and an innovative mobile survey targeting high school teachers, communities living in and around conservation areas and the media sector. Phase two is capacity building based on information gathered and lessons learned to enhance resilience to climate change through improved disaster risk and climate change knowledge and education.

Although this work is still in progress, it is becoming evident that in order to increase resilience against climate change impacts and disaster risk there is a need to rethink on key issues, namely how to factor social risk related perceptions and behaviours in disaster risk and climate change policies and strategies. Key questions which are emerging based from the social perceptions include how to efficiently and effectively mainstream DRR and CCA in schools considering the prevailing challenges namely sufficient capacities, resources, and the complex interaction between the different systems e.g. schools, family and communities. Additionally, although it may be case and context specific, there is need revisit the leading role of how media is able to shape national disaster risk and climate change knowledge in order to enhance resilience to climate change impacts and disaster risks in the Pacific

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