

Building Resilience to El Nino Related Flood Events in Northern Peru Using a Structured Facilitation Approach to Interdisciplinary Problem Solving

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Abstract : This paper critically reviews the outcomes of a 4 day workshop focused on building resilience to El Niño related Flood Events in northern Perú. The workshop was run jointly by Birmingham City University (BCU) in partnership with Instituto Geofísico del Perú (IGP) and was hosted by the Universidad de Piura (UDEP). The event took place in August 2018 and was funded by the Newton-Pauley fund administered by the British Council. The workshop was a response to the severe flooding experienced in Piura during the El Niño event of March 2017 which damaged over 100,000 homes and destroyed much local infrastructure including around 100 bridges. El Niño is a recurrent event and there is concern that its frequency and intensity may change in the future as a consequence of climate change. A group of 40 early career researchers and practitioners from the UK and Perú were challenged with working together across disciplines to identify key cross-cutting themes and make recommendations for building resilience to similar future events. Key themes identified on day 1 of the workshop were governance; communities; risk information; river management; urban planning; health; and infrastructure. A field study visit took place on day 2 so that attendees could gain first-hand experience of affected and displaced communities. Each of the themes was then investigated in depth on day 3 by small interdisciplinary teams drawing on their own expertise, local knowledge and the experiences of the previous day's field trip. Teams were responsible for developing frameworks for analysis of their chosen theme and presenting their findings to the whole group. At this point, teams worked together to develop links between the different themes so that an integrated approach could be developed and presented on day 4. This paper describes the approaches taken by each team and the way in which these were integrated to form an holistic picture of the whole system. The findings highlighted the importance of risk-related information and the need for strong governance structures to enforce planning regulations and development. The structured facilitation approach proved to be very effective and it is recommended that the process be repeated with a broader group of stakeholders from across the region.

Keywords : El Niño, integrated flood risk management, Perú, structured facilitation, systems approach, resilience

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