

Cultural Perceptions of Hazard and Risk

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**“You need to move up into the mountains
away from the river”**



4 Key Questions:

- 1. How relevant is 'culture' to disaster risk reduction?**
- 2. How do we engage with culture?**
- 3. What is the value of indigenous knowledge and how can we access/utilise this for DRR?**
- 4. Where do the challenges lie in putting research into practice with regards to culture and DRR?**

Is culture relevant?

- **Technocratic**  **Socio-Political**
- **Need for a holistic perspective**
- **Disasters as 'Acts of God'???**
- **Knowledge, Views, Beliefs = CULTURE**

UK FLOODS

- **Complacency Culture**
- **Culture increasing risk?**



Positive and Negative Culture

- **Why does a community choose to live on the slopes of an active volcano?**
- **Why do they feel that prayer will ensure their survival?**
- **Why do they boil stones during a hungry period?**

Is Culture Relevant? **YES!!!!**



Engaging with Culture.....

HOW????

- **Community based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR)**
- **Indigenous / Local Knowledge**



Indigenous Communities and DRR

- **2004 Tsunami**
 - **Simeulue Island, Indonesia**
 - **Moken Sea Gypsies, Thailand**
- **Cyclone Zoe 2002 - Solomon Islands**

Difficulties of engagement

CASE STUDY: Char people Jamuna River, Bangladesh.



- **Both communities aim to reduce risk**
- **Integrating both knowledge bases**

Indigenous Knowledge and DRR

WHY.....

- **VFL and GAR Findings**
- **Community based DRR - participatory**
- **Integration of bottom up and top-down**
- **Proactive rather than reactive**
- **Cost effective**

New Risks, New Challenges

- **Climate change, increased urbanisation, population etc**
- **Indigenous knowledge being lost yet indigenous communities have adapted for centuries.**
- **Romanticising IK**

Culture & DRR: Putting Research into Practice and Practice into Research

- **How accessible is culture and local knowledge - and how do we utilise it?**
- **Guided discovery**
- **More holistic approach**
- **Empowering communities**
- **Integrating relevant and applicable IK and SK**

