



## FROM THE DIRECTOR

The latest cyclone in India is an great story of the advances made in disaster risk reduction in just a decade. The cyclone that hit Odisha 14 years ago caused the death of ten thousand people and brought misery to hundred of thousands. The cyclone of October 2013 has been devastating but has caused the deaths of maybe a dozen (although this reported figure will probably rise). A low tide helped, but this is a story of effective disaster preparedness by the population at large, government planning, forewarning through technology and modelling and much improved communication. But disasters also have another side - and that is recovery. Even in industrialised countries with almost limitless resources at their disposal, we have seen a patchy recovery in Italy after the L'Aquila earthquake in 2009 and in Japan after the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami in 2011. Several IRDR colleagues have been involved investigating the recovery in both regions, linked particularly to the UK Earthquake Field Investigation Team (EEFIT) who have now prepared reports on the course of the recovery in these regions ([www.istructe.org/resources-centre/technical-topic-areas/eeffit](http://www.istructe.org/resources-centre/technical-topic-areas/eeffit)).

There is clearly much work still to be done. With the start of the new year we warmly welcome two new academic appointments, Dr Ilan Kelman, as a Reader, appointed jointly with the UCL Institute of Global Health, and Dr Gordon Ross, as a lecturer, appointed jointly with the Department of Statistical Science. These joint appointments, across departments and across faculties, are exciting new developments for us, as understanding risk and reducing the impact of disasters are complex challenges, that require cross-disciplinary responses. We look forward to a strengthening and deepening of our collaboration with Statistics and Global Health. We also welcome the appointment of a new IRDR Administrator, Christine Bowles. And finally a welcome to our new students: our PhD student population will grow to 17 by the end of 2013, we are in the second year of the MRes, and our first cohort on the new MSc Risk, Disaster and Resilience have arrived.

The up-and-coming events for this term include, the launch of the 2013-14 [IRDR Seminar Series](#) with a seminar by Aleksey Marchenko from Svalbard on Arctic risks this Thursday 17th October, the first [IRDR Building Resilience Forum](#), with Civil Engineering and the Bartlett School, on 5th November and the IRDR-organised [UK-Japan Workshop on Disaster Resilience](#) at UCL (21st -23rd November). I will give a public lecture on "After Fukushima: risk and resilience to disasters in Japan" as part of the UCL lunch hour lecture series on 19th November.

**Peter Sammonds**  
**Director, UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction**

### Contents

From the Director
About the Institute
Events
1. IRDR 2013-14 Seminar Series
2. IRDR Building Resilience Forum
3. UK-Japan Workshop in Disaster Resilience in Celebration of 150 years of Japan's Choshu Five
4. UCL Lunch hour Lecture: After Fukushima: risk and resilience to disasters in Japan by Peter Sammonds
News
1. 2013 Annual Report of the IRDR
2. Third IRDR Annual Conference, June 2013
3. NERC Funding for Dr Serge Guillas
4. IRDR Debating Matters
Join the Institute
Become a member of the

## ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

Natural hazards such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, floods and storms destroy lives and damage economies across the globe; pandemics have the potential to bring death and suffering on an unprecedented scale; while climate change may increase the severity of both natural and health disasters.

How society sees risk, how to link understanding of the causative mechanics to statistical approaches, and how to increase resilience and reduce the risk of disasters are common themes cutting across research in natural, environmental, health and technological hazards.

Reducing global risks and disasters presents a colossal challenge that requires coordinated and collaborative action.

UCL is uniquely well-placed to lead research and teaching in risk and disaster reduction, with at least 70 academics across 12 departments and seven faculties involved in world-class research and practice in the field.

To maximise the impact and value of our activities in risk and disaster reduction, and to increase and enhance interdisciplinary collaboration and cooperation, we propose to bring together individual areas of expertise, under the umbrella of a UCL Institute for Risk & Disaster Reduction, built around established centres across UCL.

We also seek to contribute to the UCL Grand Challenges of Global Health, Sustainable Cities, Intercultural Interaction and Human Wellbeing.

## EVENTS



1. **[IRDR 2013-14 Seminar Series](#)** The next seminar will be by ***Professor Aleksey Marchenko***, from the University Centre at Svalbard, at 4.00pm on 17th October, Torrington (1-19) 115 Galton Lecture Theatre, speaking on the highly topical subject, given the current controversy and arrest of Greenpeace activists for piracy, of “Offshore oil installations and ice management in the Barents Sea”. All are welcome.



2. **[IRDR Building Resilience Forum](#)** Our first Forum this academic year is the ***IRDR Building Resilience Forum*** on Tuesday 5th November at 3.00pm convened by ***Dr Joanna Faure Walker***. The forum will take the form of presentations by keynote speakers and an open discussion bringing people together from disciplines including earth sciences, engineering, social sciences and statistics in order to discuss potential research ideas and collaborations for the topic of how to build resilience. For further information please contact Joanna: [j.faure-walker@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:j.faure-walker@ucl.ac.uk).



3. **[UK-Japan Workshop in Disaster Resilience in Celebration of 150 years of Japan's Choshu Five](#)** The IRDR and Tohoku University's International Research Institute of Disaster Science (IRIDes) are co-organising an international workshop on ***Disaster Resilience*** at UCL (21st-23rd November). The workshop's primary goal is to promote international collaboration in the fields of disaster science, engineering and social science and is part of the year-long celebration of Choshu Five coming to study at UCL. On their return to Japan, the five men went on to form the core of a new Japanese government, leading the nation's transformation from an isolated state to one of the world's foremost technological powers. The theme of the workshop include tsunami and earthquake engineering and science, and building social resilience.



Registration is open at:

4. **UCL Lunch hour Lecture: After Fukushima: risk and resilience to disasters in Japan by Peter Sammonds** Peter will deliver a public UCL lunch hour lecture on 19th November from 1.00 to 2.00pm in the Darwin Lecture Theatre. The Japanese islands face an extraordinary range of natural hazards – earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunami, lahars and tropical cyclones. In the wake of the 2011 tsunami and Fukushima nuclear disaster, Peter will look at the impact of disasters, recovery and the building of resilience to natural hazards in Japan.

## NEWS



The 2013 Annual Report of the IRDR is available [here](#).



The third IRDR Annual Conference, held in June 2013, continues the success of the event and was attended by over 150 people. This was a one-day event of thought-provoking lectures and discussions, followed by our summer party. The morning commenced with a specialist session on Disaster Preparedness vs Disaster Recovery, , with panellists who included **Kate Crowley** from CAFOD and **Robert Muir-Wood** from Risk Management Solutions (RMS). This was followed by a panel-discussion session on Media, Society and Disaster with panellists who included **Tom Sheldon** from the Science Media Centre and former journalist at Yomiuri Shinbun and UNDP programme officer **Yumiko Horie** joining from Japan. The keynote lecture in the afternoon was delivered by Sir **David Omand**, formerly UK Security and Intelligence Coordinator and Permanent Secretary at the Home Office. This was followed by **Ian Davis**, who has worked as an author, academic teacher and researcher, NGO director and international consultant, in a long career in disaster management, in conversation with BBC journalist **Julian O'Halloran**, from the *Moral Maze*.

The conference was preceded by the First Academic Conference on Risk and Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience for those researching and teaching in higher education in the UK and Europe on risk and disaster risk reduction, hosted by the IRDR. We also held the first national careers events.



Dr Serge Guillas has received £100k from the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) to demonstrate that a tsunami catastrophe risk model can be constructed for the Cascadia Region (British Columbia in Canada, Washington and Oregon in the USA). High resolution runs from the tsunami model VOLNA will be done on the new GPU cluster Emerald. Computationally efficient statistical representations of VOLNA through emulation will allow the quantification of the ranges of possible tsunami wave heights that result from the ranges of possible earthquake sources. This hazard model

will be embedded into the catastrophe modelling platform from the Oasis Loss Modelling Framework in order to calculate losses for insurance portfolios.

The team is collaborating with Professor Frederic Dias (University College Dublin) and includes Dr Simon Day (UCL IRDR), as well as Andria Sarri (UCL IRDR & Statistical Science).

- [Dr Serge Guillas](#)
- [Emerald](#)
- [UCL Institute for Risk & Disaster Reduction](#)
- Oasis Loss Modelling Framework: <http://www.oasislmf.org/>



After successfully hosting part of the Debating Matters National Finals in June 2013, the IRDR will now host regional qualifying rounds for the 2013-2014 competition. Debating Matters is a national debate competition for 6th form students, run by the Institute of Ideas. It offers a fresh, accessible and engaging format for debating contemporary issues. More details available on the [IRDR Debating matters webpage](#).



Professor David Alexander, Professor of Risk and Disaster Reduction in the UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction gave his inaugural lecture, [Around the world in 80 disasters: global trends, local challenges](#), on Monday 7th October 2013.

## JOIN THE INSTITUTE



Become a member of the UCL Institute for Risk and Disaster Reduction Reducing global risks and disasters presents a colossal challenge that requires coordinated and collaborative action. UCL is uniquely well placed to lead research in risk and disaster reduction, with at least 70 academics across 12 departments and 7 faculties involved in world-class research, teaching and practice in the field. To become a member of the Institute complete the form at the following link <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/rdr/join/>

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