



International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies



## Reconstruction and Recovery in Urban Contexts

**7<sup>th</sup> International i-Rec Conference and Student Competition,  
London, July 6-8, 2015  
The Bartlett Development Planning Unit, University College London**

### Objective

Disasters and crises are occurring more frequently and with greater intensity in urban areas (IFRC 2010). Crises occurring in the urban context pose particular challenges for recovery and reconstruction, due in part to intense social inequalities, complex infrastructure and governance systems, competing agendas for access to land, density of the built environment and the numbers of people affected (Sanderson, Clarke and Campbell, 2012). Cities can be seen as both part of the cause that create the crisis, and also part of the solution. Urban crises can be brought on by inter-related factors, such as chronic vulnerability conditions that lead to small-scale disasters, by natural hazards and conflict occurring in densely populated areas that lead to large scale disasters, when internally displaced people and refugees seek refuge in urban areas, and by the impacts from climate change.

This conference seeks to understand how urban contexts shape disaster recovery and to look at how reconstruction and recovery activities can enhance the functioning of cities. The conference seeks to push the boundaries of knowledge on reconstruction and develop new areas of inquiry that help to solve the complex problems faced in urban areas. The conference is expressly designed to bring researchers and practitioners together to collaborate together in moving this critical issue forwards, and in bringing it to the attention of decision makers faced with the realities of post-disaster organization and action.

### Conference website

<http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/i-rec>

### Conference format

Offering a platform to grapple with such realities, the conference proposes a number of keynote presentations and thematic round table sessions (following the individual paper presentations grouped by theme) to question and reshape research and practice agendas for the identification of innovative approaches to reconstruction and recovery.

### Roundtable 1: Disasters in urban contexts

This roundtable seeks to theorise disasters in urban contexts and to develop a deeper understanding of what post-disaster responses in the urban context need to be addressed. How do disasters impact on city systems and their residents? How does this understanding inform post-disaster responses in urban contexts? How do urban contexts necessitate different management and governance arrangements for reconstruction and recovery?

### **Roundtable 2: Housing and beyond: reconstructing lives, reconstructing cities**

Post-disaster recovery in urban areas means the restoration of livelihoods, the rebuilding of infrastructure and restoring the markets that support these. How does reconstruction support the holistic recovery of affected people, addressing the needs that are most important to them? How can reconstruction support the recovery of urban systems, such as housing, water, energy, health, communications or transport? Are there ways to support these in an integrated manner?

### **Roundtable 3: Linking a past, present and future: histories, urban imaginaries, urban design and its influence on urban recovery**

Cities are a product of their own culture, history and people's imagination of future trajectories. How does the history of a place, its built environment and its people inform recovery and reconstruction? How has the history of cities contributed to their vulnerability? In what ways are people's imaginations of place captured in reconstruction planning?

### **Roundtable 4: Supporting urban risk reduction through reconstruction**

'Building back better' means that recovery aims to make a city less susceptible to future disasters and help its residents to become more resilient to a range of stresses, including climate change. Do vulnerability and risk issues addressed in reconstruction practices have lasting impacts on urban areas? Do local recovery programmes or humanitarian assistance build the capacity of local institutions?

### **Roundtable 5: Relocation from hazardous areas**

Damage to housing caused by disasters often means that communities or authorities may demand or consider relocating communities to safer areas. In urban areas, relocation may be proposed because land is considered 'high risk' for future disasters, and/or because higher rents can be obtained for other uses of the land. Under what circumstances does relocation away from hazardous areas enhance people's resilience? With what kinds of information are decisions about relocating made, who makes the decisions and what are the outcomes?

### **Conference set-up**

Following individual presentations (5-10 minutes each) in each round table, an informal discussion will be kicked-off by presenters on a number of participant-led choices of topic. Subsequently, the round table chair, as an expert, will extend the discussion either to a broad question put to the session as a whole, or to specific questions related to the session's thematic orientation. More detailed information on this setup will follow after abstract submission and selection.

### **Abstract submission**

We invite practitioners and researchers to submit 300-400 word abstracts, by 30th January 2015 to [irec2015@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:irec2015@ucl.ac.uk) following the abstract format available from <http://www.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/dpu/i-rec>

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Abstracts should include:

- A short title
- The name(s) and email(s) of author(s)
- Indication of the relevant round table
- Explanation of the state of the issue to be addressed, define the context, and highlight the main arguments.
- A clear explanation of the methods used or sources information
- A clear explanation of the results found and their practical and/or theoretical implications

All abstracts will be reviewed by the scientific committee and accepted abstracts will either be given a space in the programme for presentation within a round-table session, or invited to submit a poster.

All authors whose abstracts have been accepted for presentation are invited to provide an extended abstract or a paper of maximum 5000 words. Formatting guidelines will be provided. All papers and extended abstracts will be made available on a memory stick to all conference participants. After the conference a selection of papers will be published on the i-Rec website.

### Important Dates

Call for papers announced	November 2014
<b>Extended Abstract submission deadline</b>	2 March 2015
Abstract review and selection by	By April 2015
<b>Papers and extended abstracts to be submitted by</b>	30 May 2015
Registration open	1 March 2015
Early-bird payment deadline	30 May 2015

### Conference Convenor

Dr. Cassidy **Johnson**  
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### **i-Rec Conference Organising Committee**

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### **About i-Rec**

i-Rec is a web-based international network focused on the study of reconstruction after disasters. i-Rec deals with information exchange between its members in order to contribute with knowledge related to building activities in situations of crisis, particularly disasters in developing countries. It creates links between more than 200 specialists in the field of post-disaster reconstruction, particularly in the areas of architecture, engineering and construction, humanitarian aid, international development and social sciences. i-Rec organizes an international conference every two years: Montreal (Canada), 2002; Coventry (UK), 2004; Florence (Italy), 2006; Christchurch (New Zealand), 2008, Ahmedabad (India), 2010, Ascona (Switzerland) 2013. The i-Rec conferences bring together academics and practitioners interested in this field. In this regard, the conferences are a suitable environment for knowledge transfer and training based on experience and research.

Find i-Rec in Facebook [www.facebook.com/groups/iReconstruction/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/iReconstruction/)  
LinkedIn [www.linkedin.com/groups/iRec-Information-Research-Reconstruction-8103192?home=&gid=8103192](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/iRec-Information-Research-Reconstruction-8103192?home=&gid=8103192)

### **The i-Rec student competition**

Every two years, i-Rec organizes an international student competition of architectural and urban solutions for post-disaster reconstruction and disaster prevention. Participating projects must

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address: architectural and urban design, logistics and process-related solutions. The students are therefore encouraged to think about both the products and the processes of intervention.

To participate visit: <http://www.grif.umontreal.ca/i-Rec.htm>

**References:**

Sanderson, D. and Knox Clarke, P. with Campbell, L. (2012) *Responding to urban disasters: Learning from previous relief and recovery operations*. ALNAP lessons paper. London: ALNAP/ODI

IFRC, 2010. *World Disasters Report 2010: Focus on urban risk*, Geneva: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.