Local community and emergency organisational connectedness as an indicator of disaster resilience

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Disaster & Community Resilience Research Group

Our purpose: To highlight issues concerning local disaster preparation and support for local leaders before, during and after a disaster.
Current projects

❖ Community Leaders in the Blue Mountains

❖ The ‘hidden’ cost of natural disaster: Helping local community organisations identify their contribution and prioritise activities.

❖ Organisational connectedness as a measure of a community’s disaster resilience
Measures of resilience
Theoretical Framework
Research Method

The participants included:
- neighbourhood centre managers
- manager of a peak body for NGO’s
- school principal
- community development people from different organisations
Before the fires: planning & preparation
During the fires: 17\textsuperscript{TH} October 2013
Fire in the lower mountains caused by wind toppling a tree onto electricity wires

Over 200 homes were lost and a further 100 damaged

State-led recovery operations lasted 5 months, before handover to the Blue Mountains City Council
For community leaders the experience was devastating.
After the fires
Resilience & Preparedness Group:
- community sector;
- emergency services;
- DWS;
- government agencies;
- CSU evaluation team
What organisational connectedness can achieve

- Combined disaster and preparedness expos
- Collaborative delivery of household preparedness programs
- United calendar to display everyone’s proposed activities provides a united front for the community and avoids doubling up
- Collaborative approach to funding applications and research initiatives
- Preparedness is now seen as core business for the community services
Three learning points

▪ the participation of local community leaders in all phases of disaster management should be reflected in practice as well as in policy

▪ don’t wait for a disaster to strengthen the connections between local community and emergency organisations

▪ incorporate building resilience into your core mission, not a tack-on for the fire season
Thank you for listening!

Contact

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