



Living with disasters

Emerging Governance Frameworks in Queensland, Australia



Background

The Australian state of Queensland experiences a wide range of natural disasters. In the tropical North cyclones are the most prevalent hazard, whereas in the South-East of the State flooding, and to a lesser extent bushfires, are more common. The 2010-2011 South-East Queensland floods resulted in 33 deaths and are recognised as being Australia's most expensive disaster. CADWAGO researchers have worked with three local governments in the South-East region to understand how Disaster Management has been integrated into their organisational structures, creating what we believe is a 'Disaster Management culture.'

Points for discussion

- Policies and practices are vital components to learn about disaster management, but personal relations and familiarity with people involved in the managing process are also essential. The research shows that it is essential to share experiences with like-minded people and to ask questions about particular issues that cannot entirely be prescribed for effective Disaster Management collaboration and practice.
- The tendency to describe monolithic and rigid disaster management systems may be suitable for certain contexts, but what has been observed in the South-East Queensland region is that managerial practices emerge from collaboration. Although taking place within the formalised structures of government, these practices are not entirely prescribed by them.

- Knowing and taking into account cultural practices of the local and affected communities are essential to how local councils approach Disaster Management. It is also important to understand the emerging identity and practices shared by those involved in Disaster Management.

European context

With the multiple levels of government present in Europe it is important to have clarity about roles and responsibilities when managing a disaster. CADWAGO researchers believe that although such clarity is indispensable in the governing process, it is the support of emergent collaborations and effective coordination that is needed to create spaces where people feel empowered and well-resourced to act. This is often not reflected or appreciated in formalized governance instruments. Local governments are a good starting point to promote and reinforce the development of networks for a Disaster Management culture.

Insight for Europe

The support of emergent collaborations and effective coordination is needed to create spaces where people feel empowered and well-resourced to act.