

Disaster & Social Crisis Research Network Electronic Newsletter

Nº. 34, April – June, 2008

<http://dscrn.cindy.ensmp.fr/>

Coordinator's Report

Susann Ullberg

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Dear D&SCRN members and colleagues, summer is well under way in Europe and, for some of us, a couple of days of desired vacations. Thus, a rather short coordinator's report this time. Crises and disasters don't take vacations unfortunately. For those of you who want to stay updated, a quick glance at the UN OCHA's Relief Web (www.reliefweb.int) informs us that as by of July severe floods are affecting areas in Nepal and in Nicaragua respectively with hundreds of people evacuated; that the ferry boat that capsized in the central Philippines in June carrying fuel and highly toxic pesticides could result in major ecological disasters impacting on the health and livelihoods of the local population if not handled properly; and that an epidemic of Rift Valley Fever is threatening Madagascar. These are just a few examples of many ongoing disasters and crises all over the world. Many of them don't even reach the headlines, especially not when they are long term or so called "creeping crises." We know that this has more to do with mass media industry logics and disaster dramaturgy than with the disaster or its impact per se. The relation between disaster and the media has been written about within the social sciences, but it seems to me it could be further explored. I intend to suggest a session on this topic for our workshop at the upcoming ESA conference in Portugal 2009. Call for papers will come in due time. Speaking about this conference, I have invited you earlier to check out the ESA web page that is now working well. For those of you, then, who want to know more about current European sociology, please check out: www.europeansociology.org. As for myself, I'm currently packing my bags for a year of writing-up-dissertation, first at the Institute for

Economic and Social Development (IDES) in Argentina and then at the University of Florida. I will thus send my next coordinator's report to you from Buenos Aires, where crises sometimes seem to have been perpetuated. Perhaps is this the place to be for a disaster scholar, who knows?! In any case, I hope you enjoy the reading of this issue of the newsletter. ¡Hasta luego!

Yours sincerely, Susann

Contents

Coordinator's Report.....	1
Editor's Note.....	1
D&SCRN Web Manager report (April - June 2008).....	2
Our Members.....	2
Writers' Corner.....	2
Resources.....	5
Upcoming Events.....	6
The D&SCRN Electronic Newsletter.....	8

Editor's Note

Eduardo Runte

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Dear D&SCRN members and colleagues,

This is the second issue of the Disaster & Social Crisis Research Network Electronic Newsletter in 2008. It covers the period from April to June.

Our network continues to grow at a steady pace, with about 4 new members joining the group per trimester in 2007 and 2008. This is very encouraging and we hope this trend will continue.

In this issue, you will find an article by Ilan Kelman that discusses recent disasters in Burma (cyclone) and China (earthquake) from a disaster diplomacy angle. Dikaios Sekallariou introduces a research project aiming at exploring the daily life experiences of individuals affected by disasters. Sumana Sanyal, a graduate student and concerned citizen from India, reports on a recent outbreak of violence in West Bengal, and asks a specific

question: what can years of study in the fields of disaster and conflict resolution teach Indians, as they search their path to economic and social development?

The D&SCRN and its electronic newsletter exist to promote exchanges among researchers and practitioners in the field of disaster and crisis preparedness and response. The participation of our readers is essential. What is your field of expertise? What are your current projects? The newsletter is open to your contribution!

Sincerely,

Eduardo

D&SCRN Web Manager report (April - June 2008)

Eduardo Runte

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1. New members. Please join me in welcoming our new members: (1) Mr. Edward Cherrie, senior information and performance officer, North Lanarkshire Council Housing and Social Work Services. Mr. Cherrie is responsible for social work emergency planning and the Lanarkshire Major Incident Support Team. His email address is cherrie@northlan.gsx.gov.uk. (2) Prof. Dr. Martin Sökefeld, University of Bern. He is interested in Pakistan and Earthquakes. His email address is martin.soekfeld@anthro.unibe.ch. (3) Prof. Mingguo Wan, Wuhan, China. He is interested in emergency management, citizen trust, and social support. His email address is whwmg@hotmail.com. (4) Mr. David Evans, City and County of Swansea, Social Services. He is interested in planning statutory social care and counselling services; multi-agency training for social care, welfare and counselling services. His email address is David.Evans@swansea.gov.uk. (5) Lina Gregersdotter, Spacial Planner, Sweden. Her email address is lina.gregersdotter@gmail.com. All new members are invited to introduce themselves by writing a short piece for the "Our Members" section of the newsletter.

2. Website. You can visit our website at <http://dscrn.cindy.ensmp.fr>. The newsletter and information about our new members will be soon available online.

Our Members

Lina Gregersdotter

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I am a Swedish Urban Planning student planning to do my master thesis in the field of Flood disasters in the Bojonegoro regency (Indonesia) with a focus on

two villages, Kanor and Kalitidu. I'm leaving Sweden in August and I'm supposed to stay in the area for three months. I have a supervisor at the ITS university in Surabaya, Professor Silas and he has been kind to offer me to do my master thesis in Indonesia. I'm searching for all the data I can get in the area of flood disasters in Indonesia, and also in the Bojonegoro area. I would also like to get in contact with a good translator who can help me with some language and culture differences. Thank you! Please contact me at my email address: Lina.Gregersdotter@gmail.com

Writers' Corner

Burma and China Disaster Diplomacy

By Ilan Kelman

www.ilankelman.org

On 3 May 2008, Cyclone Nargis roared through Burma (Myanmar), killing at least 78,000 people, leaving over 56,000 missing, and affecting half the country's population. With decades of collective international experience in trying to stop such tragedies, what went wrong here?

Research by international scholars such as Ben Wisner, Tony Oliver-Smith, Ken Hewitt, James Lewis, and Michael Glantz provide the answer to that question, an answer which is being expanded through research into disasters striking politically volatile situations: disaster diplomacy (see <http://www.disasterdiplomacy.org>). The answer is straightforward – politics placing a low value on tackling disasters – but that does not mean that the answer is simple, because political influences led to the cyclone disaster before and after the storm.

Before the storm, coastal mangroves were ruined by people trying to eke out basic livelihoods. Research has shown that coastal ecosystems reduce storm surge and tsunami damage for some events. As well, the people's livelihood needs were exacerbated by an oppressive, isolationist regime that failed to implement top-down, or to support bottom-up, long-term environmental management and disaster risk reduction processes. That governance attitude ignores the research and practice showing how vulnerability is accrued as a long-term process which undermines abilities to deal with new stressors, such as climate change, or sudden events, such as cyclones.

That is long-term. In the short-term, 48 hours of warning prior to the cyclone were not heeded. Then, after the extent of the calamity became evident, the military junta was slow in mobilising domestic assistance and deliberately delayed international relief. Disaster diplomacy work from previous case studies explains that, where governments are reticent to seek peace, not even a disaster will necessarily budge them.

In fact, plans for the referendum on Burma's new constitution scheduled for 10 May proceeded except in the worst-hit areas, defying international pressure to focus on disaster response. The referendum results, of course, displayed overwhelming support for the government's proposed constitution.

Would those results have been different if the wider population had been fully aware of their government's lethal limitations? China provides a comparison.

Days after the cyclone, on 12 May, an earthquake struck China, collapsing schools for a death toll topping 40,000. Within hours, Chinese leaders were visiting the devastation and facilitating international relief efforts. The difference from Burma is from long-term trends, in that China has been increasingly open to the outside world, in part to help flex its economic muscle – but it is also from short-term trends, to show the world a positive spin for the Olympics especially given the controversies exposed by the torch relay.

Yet this disaster, too, happened over the long-term. Schools and buildings collapse in seconds, but require months to build. Years are needed to construct a vulnerable building stock. And now the population's anger is emerging against shoddy development, construction corruption, and the loss of youth in a one-child-per-family society. Which has led China to increase media restrictions, reversing their earlier openness.

Could this social upheaval emulate some previous instances, such as the 1972 Managua and the 1985 Mexico City shakings which some researchers have attributed to being the beginning of the end for the oppressive Nicaraguan and Mexican governments respectively? In a country as large as China, such upheaval is unlikely. But less dramatic political changes should be carefully watched for – as they should be considered for Burma.

The cyclone happened in hours and the earthquake happened in minutes, but the cyclone disaster and the earthquake disaster happened over decades. Previous examples illustrate that the political implications in both cases could fizzle away – or they could also be felt for a long time to come.

Further Reading:

Disaster Lexicon

<http://www.ilankelman.org/miscellany/DisasterLexicon.rtf>

Natural Disasters Do Not Exist (Natural Hazards Do Not Exist Either)

<http://www.ilankelman.org/miscellany/NaturalDisasters.rtf>

Overcoming Disaster Through P³: Principles, Policies, Practices

<http://www.ilankelman.org/fpp.pdf>

Establishing common ground for understanding: illustrating experiences of daily life after natural disasters

By Dikaios Sakellariou

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The aim of this paper is to provide an outline of a study that will explore the daily lives from the perspective of individuals affected by a disaster. The study is still in the very early stages and critical feedback on this research plan will be gratefully appreciated. This paper serves more to outline the ideas behind the study rather than providing information on the study itself. The theoretical assumptions that can provide a platform from which to explore experiences of daily life are presented and the methods that will be followed are briefly outlined. The study will draw from a variety of disciplines, but will be mainly guided by occupational science and occupational therapy.

The overarching aim of the profession of occupational therapy is to enable access to occupation (Pollard et al, in press). Occupation is a central concept in this study and will refer to: “the active process of everyday living” (Townsend, 1997, p. 19), in line with the focus of the study on daily life. Occupation is viewed as a right (WFOT, 2006) and as such access to it needs to be equitable. The *raison de être* of occupational therapy then is to work towards this right, and this also entails working with individuals whose experiences of restriction or disruption of access to occupation have been overlooked in the professional discourse. To do so in a sustainable and effective way it is important to understand the individual perspectives, bring to the surface voices unheard and accept the multitude of vantage points and meanings that impact on the experience of daily life and access to occupation.

Despite their evident impact on daily life and well-being of affected individuals, disasters have been largely ignored by the profession of occupational therapy until recently, although recognition of the implications for occupational therapy practice is growing as evidenced by recent publications (Thomas & Sinclair, 2005; Scaffa

et al 2006). Disasters can lead to community disintegration, poverty, high prevalence of disease and increased morbidity in both resource poor and resource rich context, issues that of and in themselves are determinants of access to occupation (Wilcock, 2006). In disaster contexts, a combination of factors associated with disruption of daily life patterns is often present, making it difficult to distinguish one factor from the other in accounts of individual experiences.

Individuals experience disaster in different ways, depending on their specific vantage point and the resources they have access to. The lived experiences of daily life after a disaster are diverse and indicate different perspectives. These experiences however have remained unexplored, keeping individual perspectives in the shadow. It is important that disaster preparedness and prevention models explore how the daily lives of people affected have changed as a result of a disaster as this will inform needs assessment and establishment of interventions plans. The situational analysis undertaken by the World Federation of Occupational Therapists in South East Asia after the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster (Thomas & Sinclair, 2005) stressed the importance of listening to and respecting the needs expressed by the people affected by disasters. However, very little is known on how disasters are experienced by individuals and on how daily life is being affected after a disaster. Disasters and their impact have traditionally been discussed and defined by non-affected people, while the experiences of affected people themselves are rarely heard, precluding the possibility of constructing a common ground for understanding.

Disasters impact on the life of individuals and communities, influencing their access to services and resources. The aims of this study will be to construct narratives of daily life in the context of a disaster, by exploring how the day-to-day life of individuals have been affected by a disaster. It is important to understand how the affected individuals themselves experience the disaster and its impact on their daily lives. The context for this study is likely to be the fire-hit communities in north-west Peloponnisos, in southern Greece.

The various vantage points from which people view the world, their different perspectives and the different “languages” they speak are intertwined in relationships of power. This study will draw on the Bakhtinian concept of heteroglossia to illustrate, and explore, the multitude of discourses of daily life after a disaster (Bakhtin 1995/1981). Heteroglossia refers to the multiple discourses operative in every society which regulate access to resources, including power and representation. The various vantage points people occupy, their different perspectives and the different “languages” they speak are intertwined in relationships of power, which the study will seek to illuminate.

To achieve this the study will be guided by a narrative

inquiry approach. In narrative inquiry data are drawn together and integrated into a temporally organized whole, connected through a meaning making-mechanism, a plot. Data will be generated through in-depth interviews, observation of daily practices, field notes, a reflective log of the researcher and interviews with key informants. As each narrative will refer to actions and meanings of one particular actor, who occupies a specific vantage point, instead of finding commonalities across the stories, the analysis will aim to present multiple voices, illuminating different aspects of daily life after a disaster. In effect, the analysis will favour an acceptance of heteroglossia instead of the construction of a common language.

Giving voice to individual experiences of daily life after a disaster is important for the development of synergistic approaches where community members are enabled to participate in all stages of programme planning and application in culturally appropriate ways as opposed to them being recipients of care. Such approaches refer to processes, with constant negotiations between what is required and what is possible, and an acknowledgment of the polyglossy of experience is therefore necessary. Narratives will illuminate how the participants make meaning of their life worlds. It is in the exploration of these multiple narratives that the hope for the establishment of a common ground for understanding and action lies.

A traumatic experience in the name of development: a social risk

By Sumana Sanyal

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It's my pleasure to introduce myself before you all. I'm from India. I was brought up in the city of Burdwan, West Bengal. After finishing my school there, I completed my graduation from Presidency College, Calcutta and post graduation from the university of Calcutta.

I got a research Fellowship through the U.G.C.-sponsored National Level Eligibility Test and joined Jadavpur University for a short-period research programme. After one year I got another two fellowships [years 2001 and 2003] and joined the Asiatic Society for two different projects. From the Asiatic Society, I became interested in psychoanalysis and started to pursue my projects on it.

Currently, I'm doing my Ph.D in the university of

Burdwan under the guidance of Prof. Arindam Chatterjee and my topic is to apply psychoanalysis through deconstruction on Tegore's poetry. At present I'm a lecturer of literature in Sonamukhi College, West Bengal.

I would like to admit that disaster and risk analysis is not at all my domain. As a Ph.D candidate of literature and psychoanalysis, I'm trying to explore the recent social shock of West Bengal, India, where I was born and brought up, beyond the conventional theory of the risk analysis process.

I want to convey to you all the brutal experience of Nandigram and Singur in West Bengal, India. Our ruling party [CPIM] suddenly felt that the state must be the number 1 in industry through the industrialization and development programme. The renowned private company TATA considered setting up a small car factory in the Singur Block, and demanded 1000 acres of land of their choice. Our ruling "Proletarian party" was worried whether any anti-development activity could prevent the capitalists from acquiring the land. So, they were ready to do anything, including making false promises to the locals. But how could the owners hand over their cropping lands to the industrialists so easily when the lands can be irrigated and cropped twice or more a year? How many of them are going to get a permanent job in those factories when these cultivated lands here can generate direct agricultural employment of more than 200,000-man-days per annum?

I want to present before you the real facts about the martyrs of Singur, they are Rajkumar Bhul and Tapasi Malik. Bhul was killed by the party cadets. Tapasi, whose father was a member of the landless farmers association, was brutally raped and murdered. Her face was burnt by acid to abolish her identity by the local CPIM cadets.



Conflict in West Bengal, India. (photo provided by the author)

Nandigram faced this barbarian brutality as the land grabbing process was performed. In the name of development violence occurred on women bodies, and at least seventeen minors were raped. It's not a simple issue of industry versus agriculture or the SEZ policy, this is the question of the musclepower of the state.

On 14th March, 2007, a mass killing operation took place in Nandigram and it was a cold blooded murder. The people of Nandigram protested against a chemical

hub at the cost of their cropping lands. They broke the bridge of the village Bhangabera to prevent the hooligans from coming. Shower of bullets killed the farmers of Adhikaripara. Women barricaded with choppers and flags in Sonachura village. The party hooligans were in disguise of policemen and took part in rapes and killings. CPIM leaders said that those killings occurred in order to reestablish the 'rule of law'. The killers and the dead, both were holding weapons, but the poor people of Nandigram lost lives for that bloody "rule of law." A mother of Nandigram said to a T.V channel, "At a distance I saw two men were molesting my daughter." This is nothing but a sexual transgression which only a woman can feel.

Compensation is granted for the land owner, but what is the fate of that marginal ploughman? Isn't it necessary to discuss this problematic issue with the local community? In this emergency the villagers have no one to turn to for help, and the police become numb and completely fail to prevent the panic of uncertainty.

Do you think only the flyovers on a highway, the multiplex, or health drinks are the true signs of development in a third world country like India? May I call this fast industrialization process as a power game? A social risk?

I would like to convey my gratitude to Dr. Suman R. Sensarma as he informed me the link of your reputed group and inspired me to convey my feelings. I consider myself lucky that I have such companions with whom I visited Nandigram. We need your valuable suggestion and help, to do some useful. It would be our pleasure if anyone of you would come here to see the horrible situation and help us.

I look forward to receiving your comments and eagerly waiting to learn something about social risk analysis and the methods to reduce the social psychological shock of my neighbours of Singur and Nandigram.

Resources

Children and disasters

Volume 18, number 1 of the *Children, Youth and Environments Journal* is now online. This special issue examines the vulnerability and resilience of children and youth before, during and after disasters. It contains a unique collection of 20 papers from around the world, an annotated compilation of resources, four book reviews, and a media review:

http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/18_1/index.htm

With readers in over 160 countries, the CYE Journal is a refereed publication with authoritative research articles, in-depth analyses, cutting-edge field reports, and critical book reviews for a multidisciplinary audience.

Recommend a subscription to your librarian:

<http://www.colorado.edu/journals/cye/announcements/JournalRF.pdf>

Louise Chawla, Fahriye Sancar, Willem van Vliet

Editors - *Children, Youth and Environments Journal*

Oral History and Disasters

Picked up from the H-OralHist mailing list. Thanks to Dr. Will C. van den Hoonard at the University of New Brunswick for bringing this to our attention. The mailing list can be joined through the website <http://www.h-net.org/~oralhist/>.

“The Regional History Project at UC Santa Cruz University Library conducted a series of oral history interviews following the 7.1 Loma Prieta Earthquake of October 17, 1989. The interviews were done by students who were trained by our office. The entire transcript is available online:

<http://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/quake.html>” - *Irene Reti*

“There was at least one oral history project done in the immediate aftermath of the 1985 Mexico City earthquake, with a follow-up project a year later. There were articles about these efforts in *The Oral History Review* :

Elena Poniatowska, "The Earthquake," in *The Oral History Review* 16/1 (Spring, 1988), p. 7-20

Eva Salgado Andrade, "Epilogue: One Year Later," in *The Oral History Review* 16/1 (Spring, 1988), p. 21-31” - *Mary Larson*

University of Delaware's Disaster Research Center releases its 2007 Report

The Disaster Research Center (DRC) is pleased to present our 2007 Annual Report. Despite this being a year of changes at DRC – a new Director, a new role as a University-wide center at the University of Delaware, and a new location – it has been a productive year.

As the newly appointed Director of DRC, I am proud to be part of the tradition of DRC and excited to be leading DRC through these challenging times. I am honored to be the first director of DRC that comes from Engineering. I am also very fortunate to have the opportunity to interact with several of the former directors on a day-to-day basis and to have spoken with all of the past directors. The founding directors, Emeritus Professor Henry Quarantelli and Emeritus Professor Russ Dynes, are both active and valuable participants in the Center.

As a University-wide center, DRC now reports to Vice Provost Carolyn Thoroughgood and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. We will maintain our close ties to the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice but DRC is now embarking on a new era as the Center builds on and maintains this foundation in social

science research and broadens its activities to more explicitly embrace interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and cross disciplinary research. This includes developing and supporting a new interdisciplinary graduate program in disasters, including faculty from other disciplines, developing a strategic plan to chart our future, and revamping our website. In the fall, we welcomed Associate Professor Rachel Davidson and Assistant Professor Earl (Rusty) Lee to DRC. Both have appointments in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Rachel comes to the University of Delaware from Cornell University and Rusty comes from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Our new location in newly renovated facilities in Graham Hall is spacious and comfortable. We have space to house faculty, staff, graduate students, visitors, and the E.L. Quarantelli Resource Collection, as well as undergraduate workspace and an area for our new Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. Please come and visit, use the Collection, or attend one of our Salon Series seminars.

The complete report can be obtained by contacting the DRC at <http://www.udel.edu/DRC>.

Sue McNeil, Ph.D., P.E., DRC Director

Upcoming Events

SAMRISK Conference: Is there a Nordic model for societal security and safety?

The Programme Board for SAMRISK will organise a conference on the topic "Is there a Nordic model for societal security and safety?" in Oslo 1-2 September 2008. The target groups for the conference are researchers, civil servants, industries and organisations in all the Nordic countries. There will be key-note speeches, discussions and presentations. The conference is supported by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

For information: <http://www.forskningsradet.no>

3rd Symposium on Resilience Engineering

October 28 – 30, 2008

Antibes-Juan-les-Pins, France

The term Resilience Engineering represents a new way of thinking about safety. Whereas established risk management approaches are based on hindsight and emphasise error tabulation and calculation of failure probabilities, Resilience Engineering looks for ways to enhance the ability of organizations to create processes that are robust yet flexible, to monitor and revise risk models, and to use resources proactively in the face of disruptions or ongoing production and economic pressures. In Resilience Engineering failures do not stand for a breakdown or malfunctioning of normal system functions, but rather represent the converse of the adaptations necessary to cope with the real world

complexity. Individuals and organizations must always adjust their performance to the current conditions; and because resources and time are finite it is inevitable that such adjustments are approximate. Success has been ascribed to the ability of groups, individuals, and organizations to anticipate the changing shape of risk before damage occurs; failure is simply the temporary or permanent absence of that.

Point of contact

symposium@resilience-engineering.org

Look for updates at

www.resilience-engineering.org

World Conference of Humanitarian Studies

4-8 February 2009

Groningen, The Netherlands

Humanitarian crises caused by conflict or natural disaster have increasingly become the subject of study of a range of disciplines, including international relations, international law, development studies, anthropology, conflict studies, and forced migration studies. In addition, new research groups are being formed that focus especially on humanitarian action. In particular, the present growth of these fields in countries regularly struck by crises is significant. Yet, there is no venue where these scholarly communities can debate their different insights and understanding of humanitarian crises, in dialogue with policy actors and implementing agencies. The Universities of Bochum, Groningen and Wageningen therefore organise the first world conference of humanitarian studies.

Since the early 1990s, the manifestations and understandings of humanitarian crises have changed constantly: From post-Cold War optimism to caution when numerous intra-state conflicts started and/or ended, to become dominated by the Global War on Terror and its grand conflicts. Recurring droughts and climate change have altered our perception of disasters from sudden and exceptional events to repeating or chronic forms of crises. Response mechanisms to humanitarian crises have likewise undergone rapid developments, ranging from new forms of integrated response combining diplomatic, military and development approaches; new judicial instruments including the International Criminal Court and UN-Resolution 1325 that advances women's leadership in the resolution of crises, and – in the domain of natural disasters – mounting attention for disaster preparedness. Humanitarian action has become highly professionalised, yet continues to be beset by challenges including the positioning of principled humanitarian aid in relation to other interventions, flaws in the infrastructures of aid, and the coordination of the numerous old and new actors that have entered the scene. Media attention has become more critical, and populations

receiving aid have frequently become sceptical about its results.

Although humanitarian studies are part of many different academic domains, we propose to define the nascent field as mono- or multi-disciplinary studies that analyse

- the causes, dynamics and effects of humanitarian crises (conflict and/ or natural disaster);
- the politics and discourses of humanitarian crises;
- the responses to crises, including local coping practices as well as political, military and humanitarian interventions; the dynamics of humanitarian response policies, programmes and organisations;
- the processes of rehabilitation, and the linkages with development, peacebuilding, and security;
- the legal issues pertaining to humanitarian affairs;
- the experiences and lifeworlds of refugees and internally displaced people, and the refugee regimes employed towards them.

There are – fortunately – no uniform methodological or theoretical approaches to the study of humanitarian crises. Yet, calls for more reflection about humanitarian action abound and criticism is common. There remains a dire need for independent, in-depth research into the realities of humanitarian crises. Much research takes place at the policy level; implementation processes and local aspects urgently require more attention. Most of the humanitarian scholars are based in the North, outside of the main crisis areas, thus replicating some of the shortcomings of humanitarian policy.

The World Conference of Humanitarian Studies provides a meeting ground of these different scholars and practitioners. It aims to reflect one of the key characteristics of humanitarian studies: the close collaboration and dialogue with policy makers and practitioners. Hence, it is open to participation by all these groups, provided that participants present papers. As a World Conference, it aims to establish a global representation of humanitarian studies and foster interdisciplinary debate on a grand scale. Its central aims are

- to provide a meeting ground for academic communities and practitioners concerned with in-depth research on humanitarian issues;
- to take stock of the current theory, debates, and issues of humanitarian studies;

- to reflect on current practice and identify opportunities for improving humanitarian practice; and
- to involve Southern scholars and practitioners more strongly into humanitarian politics, responses, debates, and studies.

Important dates

15 June - 1 October - submission of paper abstracts

1 October - 31 October - early bird registration

1 January 2009 - close of registration

Contact Information

info@humanitarianstudies2009.org

<http://www.humanitarianstudies2009.org/>

XVII World Congress of Sociology

July 11 – 17, 2010

Gothenburg, Sweden

In 1998, the World Congress of Sociology was in Montreal, Canada. In 2002, it was in Brisbane, Australia. In 2006, it was in Durban, South Africa.

In 2010, it is coming back to Europe after a 16 year absence. (It was in Bielefeld, Germany, in 1994.) The location is Gothenburg, Sweden and the dates are July 11-17, 2010.

It's still a long time away but it's worth marking the dates in your calendar.

Many of those involved in the network have found it difficult to find sufficient funds to travel to Australia or South Africa. This should be much less of a problem with the Congress back in Europe.

Please let the organizers of the Research Committee on Disasters know if you have ideas for a session topic or simply plan to submit a paper.

The organizers are Joe Scanlon from Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada

(jscanlon@ccs.carleton.ca) and Lori Peek at Colorado State University in Fort Collins in the USA (lori.peek@colostate.edu).

Disaster-related sessions are allocated based on how many persons belong both to the International Sociological Association and the International Research Committee on Disasters. The committee's new chair – he took office in February – is Ron Perry of Arizona State University. He can be reached at Ron.Perry@asu.edu.

This is the quarterly electronic newsletter of the Disaster & Social Crisis Research Network. The purpose of the D&SCRN is to promote the study, research and analysis of “natural”, “technological” and “social” disasters with a view to contributing to the development of disaster resilient European communities, and preventing or mitigating the human, economic, social, cultural and psychological effects of crises and disasters.

The D&SCRN Electronic Newsletter is published four times a year (March, June, September and December). The previously published newsletters are downloadable at the network's webpage: <http://dscrn.cindy.ensmp.fr/>.

Announcements of conferences, book, film, and CD-ROM reviews, reportage on conferences, disaster diaries, brief articles on best or worst practices in disaster prevention and recovery, commentaries on disasters and crises, human interest stories relevant to disasters, etc. should be sent electronically to the editor, Eduardo Runte (dscrn.news@gmail.com) no later than the first of the month of publication. Contributions to the newsletter should preferably be written in a concise format (½-1 page long maximum) in order to make reading comprehensive albeit focused. Ideas should be referenced (Author, year), but there is no need for complete reference list.

Relevant contributions from the field of disaster and crisis research, as well as from applied disaster and crisis management practice, are most welcome!

All “signed” texts express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the coordinator, the editor or of the D&SCRN.

Susann Ullberg, D&SCRN Coordinator

Eduardo Runte, E-Newsletter Editor