



regard

rebuilding after displacement

Issue 1 - March 2019

Welcome
to the first
newsletter of the
REGARD Project

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Photograph: Representatives from 5 institutions involved in the REGARD project at the project kick-off meeting in Colombo on January 2019

REGARD (REbuildinG AfteR Displacement), is a collaborative research project co-funded by EU Erasmus+ programme. This three-year research initiative aims to develop competencies in rebuilding communities following disaster and conflict induced mass displacements from the perspective of the built environment.

Background to the project

Immediately following a disaster and conflict-induced displacement a community will undergo resettlement as a process of recovery comprising efforts to restore the displaced community's equilibrium level from different perspectives. Resettlement is also a process that introduces new built environment (BE) for the displaced. This new BE potentially redefines the social system as one interlinked with other sub-systems of the community. However, following a fundamental change in the system, restoring the earlier equilibrium is almost impossible. When BE is concerned, the most overlooked aspect of understanding and determining the success of the resettlement is the role of the host community. A sudden change in the pattern of interaction with the BE would have an immediate effect on the stability of the host community.

Consequently, both the communities will suffer stress in adapting to the new BE. The BE perspective of post-disaster and conflict-induced displacement has less academic engagement and is seldom addressed in policies.

Accordingly, the aim of the project is to develop competencies in rebuilding communities following disaster and conflict induced mass displacements from the perspective of the BE and the following objectives have been set out.

- To identify the needs of the communities following disaster and conflict induced mass displacements in the perspective of BE
- To investigate the role of the BE in enhancing social cohesion between host and displaced communities
- To explore the knowledge, skills and competencies required by the BE professionals to address the needs of the host and displaced communities
- To develop, test and implement an innovative series of training courses in catering the needs of the host and displaced communities
- To develop associated curricula and resources for teachers and learners
- To introduce new uses of ICT in education by formulating technology-enhanced learning environments and materials to facilitate teaching and learning
- To propose policy recommendations to BE professional bodies in upgrading the professional competencies to address the needs of the host and displaced communities

The partnership

REGARD project is led by the University of Huddersfield's Global Disaster Resilience Centre, based in the UK. The project consortium consists of five partners from four countries in Europe and Asia;

- University of Huddersfield, UK (Lead)
- University of Central Lancashire, UK
- Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia
- Lund University, Sweden
- University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

Work Plan

This ongoing project will address the needs of the host and displaced communities following disaster and conflict induced mass displacements and facilitate successful resettlement. In enabling this, project will address the knowledge gaps of BE professionals and help improving their competencies. The project also informs policy recommendations to BE professional bodies in upgrading the professional competencies to address the needs of the host and displaced communities. In doing so, project seek to develop 10 intellectual outputs and organise 4 multiplier events in rebuilding communities following disaster and conflict induced mass displacements. The relationship between the project outputs with the project process is represented in figure 1 (below).

Output 5 - Training courses: MOOCs (Massive Open On-line Courses) in catering the needs of the host and displaced communities and the virtual training environment

Output 6 - Course Handbook and training materials (OERs) for the training course in catering the needs of the host and displaced communities

Output 7 - Professional competence audit of built environment professional bodies

Output 8 - Policy report for built environment professional bodies in upgrading the professional competencies to address the needs of the host and displaced communities

Output 9 - Academic papers: journal and conference publications on rebuilding communities following disaster and conflict induced mass displacements from the perspective of built environment

Output 10 - A journal special issue on rebuilding communities following disaster and conflict induced mass displacements from the perspective of built environment

4 Multiplier Events

1. Stakeholder seminar 1: to disseminate the findings of community need analysis

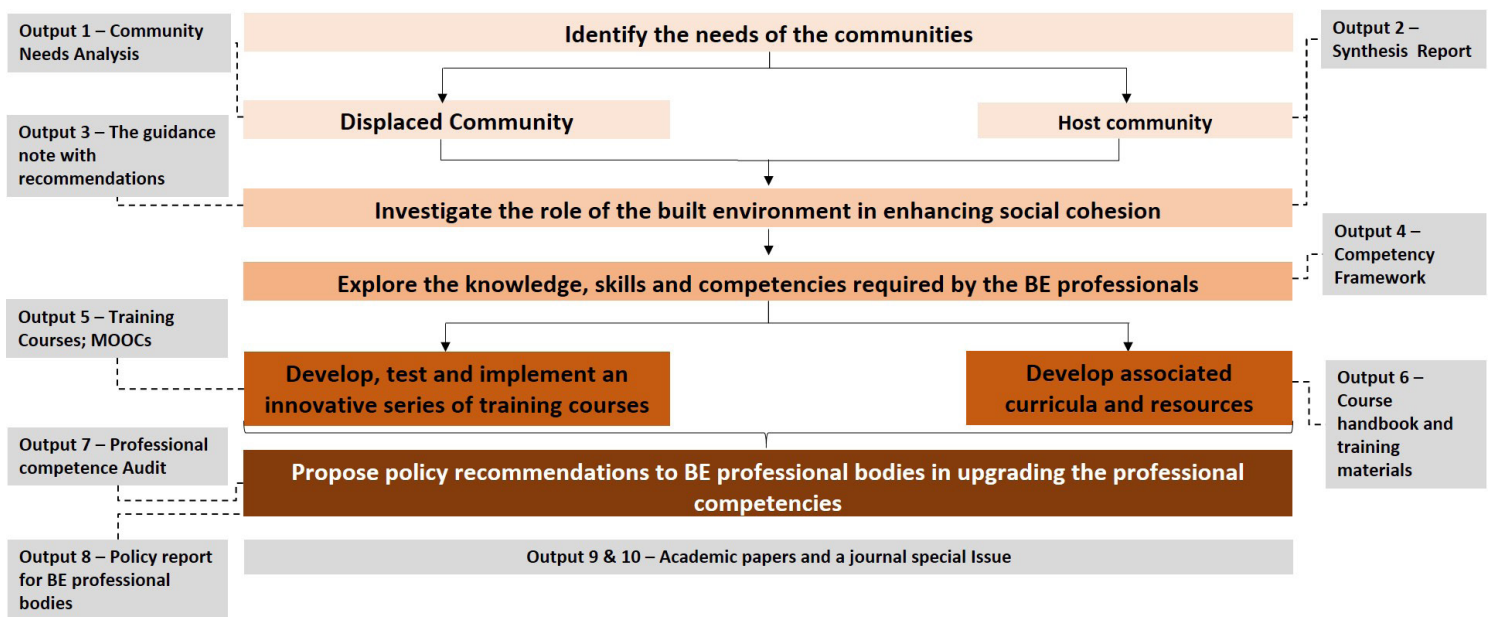


Figure 1. Relationship between the project outputs with the project process

10 Intellectual Outputs

Output 1 - A community needs analysis following disaster and conflict induced mass displacements in the perspective of built environment (Output Leader: University of Central Lancashire, UK)

Output 2 - A synthesis report on the role of the built environment in enhancing social cohesion between host and displaced communities

Output 3 - A guidance notes with recommendations on best practices of rebuilding host and displaced communities following disaster and conflict induced mass displacements from the standpoint of the built environment

Output 4 - Competency framework for Built Environment professionals to address the needs of the host and displaced communities

2. Stakeholder seminar 2: Role of the built environment in enhancing social cohesion between host and displaced communities

3. Research symposium: on rebuilding communities following disaster and conflict induced mass displacements in the perspective of built environment

4. Series of meetings/ seminars with BE professional bodies to promote policy recommendations in upgrading the professional competencies to address the needs of the host and displaced communities

REGARD Project Kick-Off Meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka



The project's initial meeting was held from 11th to 12th January 2019 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, bringing together a diverse interdisciplinary group of representatives from partner institutions. The two-day meeting concluded setting up the basis for three-year work plan, Quality assurance, Project administration and reporting, dissemination and exploitation.

Importance of identifying the needs of communities; Displaced and Host

In the case of resettlements, the satisfaction of a beneficiary can be measured based on the extent to which the welfare of the community is conserved. In order to ensure the welfare of the community, it is essential to understand how the community perceives its welfare in relation to the built-environment based on its needs and expectations. Therefore, it is important to identify the needs of communities, prior to the identification of role of built environment in addressing the community needs and enhancing social cohesion between displaced and host communities. With this view, as the starting point, a community needs analysis following a disaster, and conflict-induced mass displacement in the perspective of the built environment is proposed to be conducted based on primary data. Further, prior to the development of research instruments for the data collection, a detailed literature review in the global context was conducted identifying the needs of the displaced and host communities.

The synthesis of literature suggested that the identification of displaced and host community needs, can be streamer following two main approaches. First approach is to identify the needs of communities which are common to any community. Second approach is to identify the needs through identifying the challenges faced by displaced and host community needs.

First approach informs that that displacement or no displacement, displaced communities are still communities characterised by the common factors of communities. They still have needs, wants, values, histories, traditions, demographic attributes and so on, which needs to be adequately considered in resettlement plans. When understanding the community needs entails to any type of community, Community Tool Box (2018), present a comprehensive approach introducing 13 key aspects of a community; physical aspects, infrastructure, patterns of settlement, commerce, and industry, demographics, history, culture, existing groups, existing institutions, economics, government/Politics, social structure, attitudes and values. Accordingly, the consideration can be given that displaced and host communities are also characterised by the factors of a community. Hence, identification of their needs should follow the same route. However, one cannot understand what characterises -

out getting close to the affected communities and their hosts. Thus, a resounding of the importance of consulting these communities before the post conflicts and disaster built environment plans. Perera et al. (2017) conducted research on identifying the specific expectations of the community stakeholder group that should be aligned and embedded with the activities and services of built environment professionals, and found out interesting facts. According to them, the understanding of these needs and its entrenchment in the capabilities of construction professionals will enhance professionals' performance while serving communities in disaster situations. This discussion opens up the second approach of identifying the community needs through finding the challenges faced by displaced and host community needs.

Following the second approach, community needs related to challenged faced by displaced communities can be categorised in six broad categories; psychological needs, socio-cultural needs, economic needs, housing and property needs, environmental needs and needs of certain groups. Out of these needs, one of the significant community needs is the psychological needs of displaced communities. Mann et al., (2018) argue that sudden loss of homes and property is associated with profound, long-term psychological vulnerabilities and increased psychiatric morbidity. Displacement disrupts the normal life, cause family separation and loss of social identity. These challenges lead to identifying the role of built environment in addressing the psychological needs of displaced communities such as restore the social identity, mental satisfaction and so on.

Socio-cultural needs are related with the social challenges of the displaced communities such as disruption to the community and cultural life, reduced access to basic needs (Food, Clothes, Water), health problems, interruption to the education, aggravation of safety and security concerns, etc.



Photograph: People displaced in Rakhine State, western Burma.
Source: DFID Burma, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dfid/8288488088>

These challenges inform the socio-cultural needs such as provision of basic services and facilities, provision of social infrastructure, restore the previous neighbourhood characteristics and sense of security which need to be addressed through the built environment.

The third type of need is the economic needs related to the economic challenges faced by displaced communities. UNISDR (2018) emphasize the displacement often destroys livelihoods and creates unemployment which provide the basis to heighten the risk of trafficking and poverty. Therefore, the built environment can play a significant role in addressing these economic challenges by restoring the livelihood, ensuring the access to previous employment or by creating new employment opportunities through the built environment. Housing and property need is the fourth type of need which relates with the provision of durable housing with legal rights and Housing design and layout related with socio-cultural needs.

Fifth type of need is the Environmental needs of the displaced communities which relate with the built environment in providing access natural resources and avoid resettling environmentally sensitive and hazard prone areas.

Further, needs of the certain groups are identified as the sixth type of need under the displaced community needs. Here the certain groups represent the women, children and young people, older people, people with disabilities, marginalised people, and indigenous communities, who tend to encounter additional challenges due to the displacement. UNISDR (2018) states that Women and children, for example, may face a greater risk of gender-based violence in crowded evacuation centres or while staying with host families. Aged people may have difficulty accessing essential medical care or aid distributions due to mobility limitations. Further, the identity of indigenous people often linked with the land and local setting. In that sense, loss of local identity and the attachment with the land can be the major challenge which need to be addressed through the built environment.

Therefore, through the identification of the needs of these special groups, built environment can address the specific needs of all those affected by displacement, with particular attention to vulnerable or marginalised individuals and groups. With the attention to the needs of host communities, literature informs that the initial relationship between the host and the displaced is mostly positive. Host families and communities often provide shelter and food, and share their access to basic social services and facilities. However, in the long run, this relationship often breakdown due to the negative impacts of sharing basic services may erode host's capacities, traditional family and social structures break down and decrease in wages and an increase in housing costs (UNISDR, 2018). Further, identification of these issues well in advance is important as the built environment can proactively solve these issues through the interventions such as design the resettlement layout considering the social structure, ensure the access to basic services and facilities without limiting the capacity of host and through the management of housing cost.

In summary, the synthesis of literature confirmed that the incorporation of community needs; displaced and host, into resettlement planning will increase the satisfaction of every members of the displaced and host communities and assist in enhancing resilient built environment.

Accordingly, with these literature informed types of community needs, REGARD project initiated the process of community need analysis. Future issues of the newsletter will provide updates on community need analysis in the coming months.

REGARD presented at the ASCENT Festival

Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga and Professor Richard Haigh together with the representatives of partner institutions, actively took part at the ASCENT Festival 2019 which demarcated the termination of ASCENT project. ASCENT project aimed to address R&I capacity strengthening for the development of societal resilience to disasters - supporting training, skills, leadership development, international collaboration and university-industry partnerships. Therefore, the ASCENT festival comprised of a series of events including an international conference on 'Capacity building for research and innovation in disaster resilience'.

This international conference was held from 15th to 17th January 2019 at Cinnamon Lakeside, Colombo, Sri Lanka, organised by University of Moratuwa and University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. REGARD was presented in a presentation session in this conference with an aim to introduce the project and to present the findings of the initial literature review of output 1; Community need analysis. Further, the conference served a great platform to share the research knowledge in the similar research areas related to capacity building for research and innovation in disaster resilience.

For further information on the REGARD project, contact:

Dr Chamindi Malalgoda
(C.Malalgoda@hud.ac.uk), or

Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga
(d.amaratunga@hud.ac.uk), or

Professor Richard Haigh
(r.haigh@hud.ac.uk)

or visit the website at
www.disaster-resilience.net/

Write for REGARD Newsletter

The REGARD project provides an opportunity for people to share knowledge and experience. This newsletter is written by the REGARD membership for the REGARD membership, and also for other readers working with built environment professional bodies, national and international NGOs, UN agencies, government and donor institutions, academics, and independent consultants.

We, the Editors of REGARD newsletter, welcome contributions from REGARD partners and associate partners. We are also pleased to consider articles submitted by anyone involved in research rebuilding communities after disaster -induced and conflict-induced displacement. If you have knowledge and experience to share, please consider making a contribution.

- The scope of contributions should be consistent with the aims of REGARD. Typically, we welcome contributions in the following categories (word counts are advisory):
- News and reports from activities and events linked to the project (100 - 500 words)
- Reports on developments in the field / projects that are being investigated by partners – these do not have to be activities directly linked to the project, but should be relevant to project partner institutions (100 - 500 words)
- Useful Resources – relevant publications, websites (up to 20 - 40 words)
- Upcoming events (20 words)

We welcome suggestions for alternative types / styles of contribution. If you have an idea for an article that you would like to develop, the Editors would be pleased to discuss it with you - send an email to Ms Chathurangene Jayakody (C.Jayakody2@hud.ac.uk)

The Editors reserve the right to edit any contribution.

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