Accessible and creative communications around resilience and risks have emerged as a central theme in discussions at National Centre for Resilience (NCR) events and meetings over the past year. In response to this, on the 9th of January 2024, we hosted a full-day symposium titled ‘The Art of Communicating Resilience’ that brought together experts from across resilience practice, academia, the third sector, the creative industries, and communities.

The objective of the day was to facilitate open dialogue and collaboration, breaking down silos between professionals and encouraging experimentation with fresh methods of engagement. The aim was not to look at critical messaging but to look at the softer elements of how communities and individuals understand the concept and buy into the idea of building resilience using inclusive and accessible methods. Throughout the past year, feedback from communities has underscored the need for useful and usable tools and guidance to bolster their resilience. Over recent months we have had multiple examples of people not taking heed of critical messaging, we want to look at how we can help prepare communities with an understanding so that when critical messaging is required, they feel empowered to act upon it.

Presentation Summaries

**Ailsa Mackay**
NCR Centre Manager, Ailsa Mackay gave a short presentation giving an overview of the NCR and the objectives for the day. Ailsa outlined the context of why we brought everyone together and briefly talked about her background in leading behavioural change projects and current practice as an artist. Ailsa highlighted the importance of visual and active learning to help communities prepare for natural hazard events.

[View Ailsa’s presentation slides here](#)

**Professor Fabrice Renaud**
Professor Renaud discussed the varied and often confusing definitions of resilience. He briefly introduced several frameworks including the notion of ‘Bouncing Back’, the idea of ‘Threshold’ and finally looking at the ‘MOVE’ risk assessment framework. In addition to this he highlighted the progression in definitions of ‘Resilience’ in IPCC reports since 2007. Professor Renaud highlighted the need to be specific and take care when using the word ‘Resilience’ to define ideas.

[View Fabrice’s presentation slides here](#)

**Dr Claire MacRae**
Dr. MacRae emphasised the crucial need for effective communication on resilience within communities. She highlighted the need to be proactive with our risk related communications. Claire addressed the issue of digital exclusion, particularly in rural areas, and the importance of exploring innovative approaches to connect with people. She emphasised the significance of ensuring our communication is relevant and regularly evaluated. Claire outlined how responses to messaging can vary based on context and lived experience.

[View Claire’s presentation slides here](#)
Activities & Discussions

‘The word resilience does not hold a lot of meaning for many people (both professional and personal sense) and we need to think about this when interacting with different communities’

‘Lack of trust of official sources is common but well trusted voices in the community are key’

‘We need to ensure transient communities are included in plans and communications’

‘Capacity for communities to learn and adapt based on evidence’

‘Awareness of history and demographics of an area is so important when looking at resilience.’

‘It’s about encouraging people who may not see themselves at risk to take sensible precautions for their circumstance’

‘The language is so vital when we talk about this. Do we talk about hazards and emergencies or use language like confidence to cope?’

‘Distinction between individual resilience plans and community resilience plans’

‘It’s about giving our communities the knowledge and confidence to make informed decisions and act themselves in an emergency situation’

‘How do we prioritise and build trust at a collective level? How do we develop communication in a way that build trust?’

‘We need to be trying new creative approaches to have conversations around resilience’

‘How to deal with generational changes and our fast changing environment’

‘People having an awareness of a ‘Go-bag’ - If you had 10 minutes to leave your house, what would you take?’

‘The use of examples of situations could be more relatable and motivate action’

‘The word resilience is confusing’

‘There can be a lot of historic baggage and negativity around the emergencies & resilience’

‘It has to be a whole systems approach to communications about hazards and actions - we cannot just look at one part’

‘It’s about taking the time to know the community you are working in. Knowing the context and vulnerabilities’

‘Encouraging less reliance on authorities leaving them to focus on the more vulnerable community members’

‘Transparency on area of risk is important and often hard to find out about until you move to an area’

‘Information access is very important - Lack of accessible offline information. You cannot get online when you have no power for 4 days’

What does resilience in the context of natural hazards mean to you?

www.ncr.glasgow.ac.uk/ nationalcentreforresilience@glasgow.ac.uk 01387 702007
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think are the main barriers to attitude and behaviour change among individuals and communities?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Decision Makers are resistant to change’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Many people do not see it as their responsibility’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Perceptions can be very distorted (including priorities) - for example by social media narratives’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Understanding Communities &amp; making assumptions’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘The general political/social/policy context - issue of political payout’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Diversity of audiences and languages simply absence of grassroots comms skills’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Priorities’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do we / could we attempt to overcome some of these barriers?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Know your audience’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Timing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Knowledge exchange of grassroots communication skills’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Presentation of data’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Strong community infrastructure’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Employ community resilience officers across Scotland (like D&amp;G)’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Framing &amp; Salience’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Window of opportunity?’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Intersectionality’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Reflection on self &amp; community’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Remember there are spontaneous volunteers’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MODERATED DISCUSSION
Concerning resilience to natural hazards:

Perceptions can be very distorted (including priorities) - for example by social media narratives

Decision Makers are resistant to change

Many people do not see it as their responsibility

Understanding Communities & making assumptions

The general political/social/policy context - issue of political payout

Diversity of audiences and languages simply absence of grassroots comms skills

Priorities

Know your audience

Timing

Knowledge exchange of grassroots communication skills

Presentation of data

Strong community infrastructure

Employ community resilience officers across Scotland (like D&G)

Framing & Salience

Window of opportunity?

Intersectionality

Reflection on self & community

Remember there are spontaneous volunteers

www.ncr.glasgow.ac.uk/
nationalcentreforresilience@glasgow.ac.uk
01387 702007
In groups participants were asked to consider how we might engage and communicate about resilience to natural hazards with some of the provided imaginary personas. Groups were advised to use the mix of specialisms and interest at their table and think about new approaches they might not have tried before, or successful engagement project they have previously work on.

- Derek 50 years old
- He lives in a luxury flat in Aberdeen
- Derek does not think he has to be ‘resilient’ as he lives in a serviced apartment in the city centre.
- Derek likes to travel so can be away for 4 weeks at a time leaving his flat unattended
- All Derek’s family live in the South of England

- A way to target Derek might be through his work, it might need to be linked to reward and recognition.
- As Derek’s family live far away could be encourage him to connect with his immediate neighbours through a possible tenants association?
- If Derek has travelled a lot does he have experience of being exposed to hazards from places he has visited? Could he share these experiences with his social group or colleagues.

- Claire is a very busy mum with three boisterous kids
- They live in a family-friendly, edge of town estate in East Kilbride
- Between school drop-offs, clubs, social occasions, keeping the house tidy, time to think about anything other than the days tasks is limited.
- Claire thinks she is probably pretty resilient compared to most people, but does not have a measure for this.

- Considered more vulnerable than she might think. How long before an event like a power outage starts to cause problems with 3 children? Does she have a support network?
- Claire’s children are great route in for engagement. Consider offering a creative or fun activity for the children which focuses round resilience
- The school her children attend is a route for engagement, trying a multi channel approach with resilience related activities in the curriculum and homework, then drip-feed ad campaigns and leaflets in school bags/social media etc. Think subtle repetition.
- Think about where Claire spend time waiting for example at swimming lessons, in GP waiting rooms. Target these areas with reading material and visual information on resilience.
Arwa and her family arrived in Scotland 6 months ago, after fleeing conflict in their homeland. They are currently staying in temporary hotel accommodation. When they arrived they had the clothes they were standing in and only a small rucksack of belongings. They are preparing for their first ever Scottish winter. They have been told by the hotel staff that it can go down to -8°C locally - something they have never experienced before.

Arwa and her family have profound needs and multiple aspects of deprivation, their basics need met before they might have time to consider anything else.

There could be language barriers and a lack of community connection yet developed which could mean they struggle with interpreting messages and not know where to get help. Things as basic as knowing to ring 999 in an emergency.

Arwa and her family might bring transferable skills and experience from hazards they have been exposed to in their home country - if facilitated well in a community group this could help to get them involved.

They could be experiencing trauma or PTSD which can affect their current resilience to events.

Luke is 17 years old. He currently lives with his mum and 2 younger siblings in Oban. Luke likes gaming, football and hanging out with friends after school. He has never thought much about natural hazards or being resilient. To be honest he is not quite sure what ‘being resilient’ means. Luke is in his last year at school and hopes to go to college after the summer and move out and live on his own.

Finishing up at school and looking to leave home - now is a key window of opportunity in this period of change.

Could school leavers or college starters be given preparedness training as part of their finishing or induction procedures? Hands on activities, role play and experiential learning mixed with story telling could be great tools for this age group.

School leavers are often looking to gain new skills and develop their CV’s - Could there be work experience or volunteering opportunities around resilience? Can we utilise 6th years to teach younger generations about resilience, preparation and hazard situations?

We need to make sure what we are communicating with this age group is relevant, engaging and we are using the right language.

www.ncr.glasgow.ac.uk/
nationalcentreforresilience@glasgow.ac.uk
01387 702007
So what’s next?

We want to work in partnership with you to create joint funding bids and help to realise your creative projects and ideas. Our team will undertake a due diligence review on the proposed project outlines. We will be inviting attendees to a series of meetings over coming months to further discuss ideas and start to craft project scopes for joint bids. The NCR does not need to lead on these bids but can work with you as a junior partner or co-investigator. Together we can work towards a more resilient future for Scotland and its communities.

So what would our role be?

- We can work with you as a service provider offering project management services when costed in as a junior partner or co-investigator on funding bids
- Where necessary we can act as a matchmaker with academics, practice or communities for projects
- We can facilitate events and conferences that align with your projects & research
- We will offer dissemination and knowledge exchange across our networks - with our blog, policy briefs, newsletter and short video series.
- We can help to develop joint funding bids

Do you have a different idea or want to work with us on another project?

Please do get in touch, we are always happy to discuss project ideas and advice on possible next steps or relevance to current work streams.

The ideal times to involve the NCR in your work are:

- When building a research funding bid
- When you have a project idea that could be scaled up to national level
- When responding to calls for existing evidence - if you have a research project that fits our interest area
- When you have research you want shared across networks

There are many benefits to work with the NCR:

- We can help with research impact - increasing the reach and dissemination of your work
- We can help identify key practice and policy stakeholders for your project
- We can introduce you to new connections for collaborative working
- We can help you access more opportunities to present at events or lead discussion
- We can disseminate and share your work to targeted audiences including policy, academia & practice

Join our Associate Membership to learn more and have first access to events, evidence calls, funding calls and knowledge exchange opportunities

Sign up on our website: ncr.glasgow.ac.uk

Please note the views and opinions expressed in this post event report are those of the attendees and speakers and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the National Centre for Resilience