

# Role of Professional Network in DRR

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## ABOUT RIKA

RIKA is a social entrepreneurship startup (DIPP-29629) with an aim of bringing research into the core of disaster management activities in India and other parts of South Asia. Resonating the Sendai declaration in relation to the need for widening the scope of Science and Technology in the disaster management, we at RIKA envision to act as a bridge connecting academic research, policy makers and field practitioners to make informed decisions and use of new technologies

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Disaster Risk Management is an inter-disciplinary field. Currently, this field has professionals with different backgrounds and skill sets but with a common understanding of Disaster Risk Reduction. A professional network of DRR practitioners will draw upon the expertise of multiple disciplines and expertise, spread across multiple institutions and geographic areas. The Network can promote and mainstream DRR at important policy forums and decision-making platforms.

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction highlights the need of coordination and mobilisation through networks to promote scientific research and technological work in the field of DRR and also to support evidence based for implementation of the framework. It also urges the need for innovation and partnership, which is linked to practice and diverse stakeholders. DRR professionals working across multiple disciplines have a great potential to share and co-create knowledge to support evidence-based practices for DRR policy design, implementation, monitoring, and review (UNMGCY, 2016). A professional network in DRR enables its institutionalisation at the organisational levels.

Knowledge sharing is one of the important aspects of any professional network. In this regard, the academic institutes have been part of the networking process. This allows science-policy interface through the professional forums. However, such networking is limited to one category of stakeholders i.e. the academia. The practitioners and scientists outside the universities remain excluded. Thus, a wholesome representation of DRR calls for the need of creation of a professional network which brings together different stakeholders in DRR including those working as academicians, policy-makers, in private sector and development practitioners.

The importance of networking stems from social networks which already exist at community levels. Informal social networks at community level have an important role in disseminating the DRR based knowledge and implementing various capacity building initiatives. Government officials and NGOs engage with such informal networks to inculcate their feedback and views in the local level policy-making decisions. However, the informal social networks face the limitations of advocating their needs and demands at the official forums due to lack of a recognised and legal status. This is where the professional networks come in to fill the gap of providing adequate representation and comprehensive understanding of the DRR issues so as to mainstream them into the development process.

### **Confederation of Risk Reduction Professionals, India**

Confederation of Risk Reduction Professionals is a platform in India created to bring together Youth and Young Professionals to promote practical application of Science, Engineering, Technology and Innovation for disaster risk reduction for making India disaster resilient. This platform enables the youth to come together and enhance their participation at the decision making and policy level. Through this network, the DRR professionals in India are able to represent themselves at international platforms of DRR professionals. CRRP is also part of the UNESCO supported UINSPIRE Alliance at the international level. The youth have also utilized the network for resource sharing and as a knowledge source. Further, the young professionals used the platform to advocate DRR as an important career option through national media in the country. The network encourages innovation through engagement of youth with the community as volunteers, trainers and professionals. CRRP also contributed to the development of UNESCO led Toolkit for Youth and Young Professionals' Platform on Working in DRR Using Their Science, Engineering, Technology and Innovation. Hence, the network progresses widening its reach and contribution to the field of DRR.

The hazards often tend to be of trans-national nature and do not adhere to the existing political boundaries. The recently seen locust attack spread from African countries to middle east and then Asia. In this regard, the professional networks at international levels can provide important inputs to the management of the cross-boundary disasters. Further, in the case of COVID-19 pandemic, the different countries are currently at different stages in terms of its containment. The professional networks can aid in cross-cultural learning and provide best practices aimed at prevention and mitigation of the pandemic.

#### **Way Forward:**

- Professional Networking in DRR provides access to resources and knowledge sharing with aim to strengthen initiatives to promote and mainstream DRR.
- It provides a forum for consultation, information sharing and cooperation on matters and themes of common interest
- The multi-disciplinarily of skills broadens the scope of DRR initiatives and allows multi-dimensional perspectives in the field of science & technology, research, innovation and development.
- Advocacy at governance level to promote the field of DRR with an inclusive and participatory approach.
- To promote cross-country partnerships and cooperation to widen the knowledge base and learnings.