Call for Applications

Munich Re Foundation and United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security proudly announce the seventh annual

Summer Academy on Social Vulnerability:
From Social Vulnerability to Resilience:
Measuring Progress toward Disaster Risk Reduction

01 – 07 July 2012
at the historic Hohenkammer Castle (Schloss Hohenkammer) in the countryside outside of Munich, Germany

Chair of the 2012 Academy: Prof. Susan Cutter
Co-Chairs: Prof. Michelle Leighton and Prof. Mohamed Hamza

For more information about the chairs, please refer to the following link: http://www.ehs.unu.edu/article/read/munich-refoundation

Accepting applications until 31 January 2012
We invite qualified PhD students who have an interdisciplinary focus and are working on research or dissertations related to measuring social vulnerability and resilience in the context of disaster risk management to apply for the 2012 Summer Academy. Most participants are expected to be graduate or post-graduate students. PhD students would be ideally in their second or third year of research. However, a few places will be reserved for practitioners who wish to take a step back from their operational work to engage with young researchers on this strategic issue. Applications are required to be submitted via email: summeracademy@ehs.unu.edu no later than January 31, 2012.
Purpose

The Summer Academy is designed to bring PhD students together with senior United Nations University and Munich Re Foundation scientists, international experts, and academic professors to facilitate the mutual exchange of research and scholarship on climate change and social vulnerability. The 2012 program will invite a group of outstanding students from graduate programs around the world to participate with experts in measuring progress towards disaster risk management.

From Social Vulnerability to Resilience:
Measuring Progress toward Disaster Risk Reduction

Over the last decade, the scientific research community has developed exemplary conceptualizations of social vulnerability to hazards and disasters ranging from root causes, to underlying drivers, to differential impacts. Many of these were embodied and further explored in the Summer Academy programs. In moving from theory to practice, indicators and benchmarks need development as a means for assessing achievement and monitoring progress towards disaster risk reduction; goals and actions outlined in the Hyogo Framework\(^1\). The development of metrics and indicators focused on social vulnerability assessment has lagged behind the theoretical and conceptual research in the field. There are many different approaches to measurement—some are qualitative in orientation and others are more empirically-based; some are applicable to the geographic scale of community or places, others are only available at national levels; some are specific to individual threats, while others take an all hazards perspective. In order to understand and monitor our progress towards achieving the goal of disaster risk reduction (including the reduction in exposure and social vulnerability) and creating resilient communities, we need adequate and comparable measures on social vulnerability and we need to begin to develop measures of disaster resilience.

This year’s Summer Academy will address some of the methodological challenges in measuring social vulnerability and resilience. Because hazards and disasters are place-specific, we will focus on the hazards of places and examine a number of empirically based approaches for measuring disaster risk (hazard exposure, losses, and social vulnerability). Many of these approaches use geographic information systems methodologies as the integrating tool, so the Academy will include tutorials on GIS and its use in hazard vulnerability assessments.

The goal of the Summer Academy is to demonstrate the importance of providing evidence-based support for managing disaster risk. To do this requires knowledge of fundamental information on disaster losses and their variability over time and across space—data that is not consistent between sectors or countries. It also requires baseline information on social vulnerability, and resilience. The development and adoption of common indicators can help communities benchmark their progress in reducing exposure, reducing social vulnerability and enhancing resilience. Communities may not be able to totally manage disaster risks in the future especially with increasing exposure, uncertainties in the frequency and severity of events under changing conditions, and with constrained financial resources, but they can be proactive in building capacity and enhancing their resilience to such events. Researchers and practitioners of the future need to understand the fundamentals of measuring these concepts to gauge progress. They also need to understand the limitations of indicators and benchmarks as tools for policy instruments and frameworks for disaster risk management.

Format

- A series of content lectures will be provided by the primary developers of hazard vulnerability assessments
- Demonstrations on GIS-based mapping of hazard exposures and losses (Munich Re Group) and mapping social vulnerability
- Hands-on tutorials on GIS and social data manipulation
- Interactive small groups

Learning Objectives

- To introduce students to the differing methodological and empirically-based approaches to hazard vulnerability assessment currently in use.
- To have students interact with some of the primary developers of vulnerability assessment metrics to better understand their strengths and weaknesses.
- To become conversant in the use of GIS and its application to social vulnerability assessment and resilience.
- To develop a prototype hazard vulnerability assessment for their home region/country.

Requirements of Participating Students

Before the Summer Academy Begins

Students who are selected for the program will be required to prepare a 20 page paper (1.5 line spacing, font size: Arial 11) by the end of May 2012. The paper needs to be in an area and dealing with issues relevant to the main theme and concept of the academy outlines above. The paper constitutes major criteria for participant selection.

In addition to a series of pre-assigned readings, student participants will be asked to investigate the availability and quality of socioeconomic and hazard data for an area of their choosing, which will serve as their exploratory dataset for the Academy.

During and after the Academy:

- The progress of the academy’s activities totally rely on participants’ engagement and input;
- Participants are required to take part in the discussion actively and fulfil their assignments;
- Participants will serve as rapporteurs in various sessions and submit their session notes by the end of the academy;
- Participants will also collaborate with their peers to draft a synthesis report of the Summer Academy outcomes and may revise their papers for consideration in the Academy’s formal publication.

Outcome

The Academy will publish its findings, including selected student papers and a synthesis report. The Academy will circulate the findings and report globally to its network of academic scholars, government and international agencies and other relevant institutions with a view to furthering international dialogue on human security in climate adaptation strategies.

Financial support

The participants are expected to cover their travel. Accommodation and meals during the week-long academy will be generously sponsored by the Munich Re Foundation. There are only limited funds available for travel support for applicants from developing countries. All applicants are encouraged to seek their own funding for travel.

Summer Academy application process

Complete applications must be received no later than 31 January 2012. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Notifications will be made mid-March 2012. The working language for the Summer Academy is English.

To apply for the 2012 Summer Academy, please submit the information listed below, in the form attached and provided at the UNU-EHS website.
Required application materials from qualified PhD students to be submitted:

1. Completed 2012 Summer Academy Application Form including:
   - Summary of your PhD research (Application Form Section C, 500 words);
   - Title and abstract of the paper you propose to write by May for the 2012 Summer Academy, should you be selected to attend the academy (Application Form Section D, 300 words);
   - Relevance of your research, your educational background, practical experience to the 2012 Summer Academy theme and countries you are particularly knowledgeable about (Application Form Section E, 150 words)

2. CV, including any research related to the Summer Academy theme you have conducted

Experts at the previous Summer Academies (2006-2011)

MRF Chair holders (2009-2012)
Prof. Susan Cutter, Carolina Distinguished Professor and Director, Hazards & Vulnerability Research Institute, Department of Geography, University of South Carolina
Prof. Mohamed Hamza, Disaster Risk Management & Recovery Consultant, Global Climate Adaptation Partnership (GCAP), Oxford Brookes University, UK and Lund University, Sweden
Prof. Michelle Leighton, Deputy Director, Tian Shan Policy Center Law Faculty, American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

MRF Chair holders (2005-2009)
Prof. Thomas Downing, Stockholm Environment Institute Oxford office, Visiting Professor, School of Geography and Environment, University of Oxford
Prof. Anthony Oliver-Smith, Department of Anthropology, University of Florida
Prof. Hans-Georg Bohle, Geography Institute, University of Bonn
Prof. Ursula Oswald Spring, The National Autonomous University of Mexico, Multidisciplinary Research Regional Center

Other experts
Mr. Mathan Ratinam, Assistant Professor, School of Design Strategies, Parsons The New School for Design
Ms. Janani Vivekananda, Senior Climate Change and Security Adviser, International Alert
Mr. Richard Reeve, Security Manager, International Alert
Ms. Alina Narousova, Migration Policy Specialist, International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Mr. José Riera, Senior Adviser to the Director of International Protection at the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Headquarters
Mr. Simon Tonelli, head of the Migration Division, Council of Europe
Dr. Benjamin G. Wisner, Oberlin College, Environmental Studies
Dr. Sami Zeidan, Legal Officer, European Commission
Prof. Norman Myers, Fellow of Oxford University and Adjunct Professor at Duke University in the United States
Dr. Frank Laczko, Head of Research and Publications Divisions, the International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Dr. Andrew Morton, the Sudan Project Coordinator, U.N. Environment Programme Post-Conflict Branch
Dr. Glenn Dolcemascolo, Technical Advisor on Disaster Risk Reduction, U.N. Environment Programme Post Conflict and Disaster Management Branch
Prof. Bernd Hansjürgens, Helmholtz Center for Environmental Research in Leipzig
Dr. Philippe Boncour, Head of the International Dialogue on Migration Division, the International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Dr. Casey Brown, International Research Institute for Climate and Society
Prof. Janos J. Bogardi, Director, UNU-EHS and ad interim Vice Rector of the United Nations University in Europe
Mr. Kikash Bhattacharyya, Mayor of Kolkata
For questions or further information about the Academy please contact:

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References:


Source of photographs in this announcement:

**Top left:** Much was flattened after the tsunami hit Meulaboh, Aceh. 29 December, 2004 © Jefri Aries/IRIN

**Top right:** Survivors clear the ruins in front of the remains of the house in Banda Aceh, the capital of Aceh Province, on 25 February, 2005 © Jefri Aries/IRIN

**Bottom left:** Jodhpur, India, Photo and caption by Thushan Amarasiriwardena © LongJaunt.com

**Bottom right:** Residents use a makeshift raft to relocate children in the flooded section of Manila. Two weeks after unprecedented flooding in Manila and surrounding areas, the country has a gain plunged into crisis after continued rains by tropical storm Parma caused fresh flooding in the northern Philippines © Jason Gutierrez/IRIN