

APCUS -SP

THE REGIONAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION RESEARCH
NETWORK ON **ACADEMIC-PRACTITIONER
COLLABORATION FOR URBAN SETTLEMENTS,
SOUTH PACIFIC**

Workshop 2 Report
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1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

There is a perception of academics as people who do not leave the office, so how can they inform us as practitioners? – Government workshop participant

This report summarises the outcomes of the second in a series of five workshops to articulate the vision and operations of the Academic-Practitioner Collaboration for Urban Settlements, South Pacific (APCUS-SP). Held on 04 July 2018 in Suva, Fiji, the workshop assembled academics with practitioners from government, humanitarian response-, development-, and civil-society organisations. The main conclusion from this workshop concurs with the findings from Workshop 1: that our participants support increased involvement of academics in humanitarian response; and that they think humanitarian and development practice will improve if we found ways to link the deep knowledge and time available for community engagement of academics with the implementation expertise and multi-year experience of those on the front lines of humanitarian and development practice.

This is not a universal sentiment, as the quote above suggests. We have some work to do in figuring out how to make academic knowledge and skill useful to implementers. That is the purpose of APCUS-SP.

Held in the Pacific and with Pacific practitioners and academics the primary participants, this half-day workshop was jointly organised with a team of practitioners from USESCAP as part of a full-day workshop including ESCAP consultation on its upcoming *Future of Asia and Pacific Cities 2019* report. Participants attended the FOAPC session in the morning and the APCUS-SP session in the afternoon.

This workshop report highlights the findings from the 04 July workshop and a series of conversations held between Jennifer Day and various academics and practitioners in the immediate days after the workshop, where some participants wished to engage in follow-up conversations and some people who had not been able to attend the meeting wished to weigh in.

Some of the findings from this workshop support and substantiate findings from Workshop 1, held in Melbourne on 29 May 2018. Throughout this report, we note where the findings concord and differ with those from the 29 May workshop. We have reproduced some background from the Workshop 1 report to provide a general overview of APCUS, its origins, aims, and fit within the existing organisations doing related work. We denote this content below by highlighting it in light grey.

The major conclusions are as follows:

- The network should focus more broadly on settlements, rather than narrowly on shelter
- Use of terminology like, “city,” may be problematic in the Pacific
- Our mission must be more-clearly stated
- An academic-practitioner network can contribute across the humanitarian “cycle,” but the idea of disasters as cyclical should be readdressed
- We should carefully consider whether the academics-practitioner distinction is necessary
- Current academic-practitioner collaborations are constrained by institutions and the limits of personal networks
- We should consider whether the title of the network should focus on *who* is involved rather than the *what* we do
- We need to streamline and simplify our outreach language and consider doing so with the Mission and Goals statement.

This workshop report also generated the following queries, which should be addressed in future workshops:

1. Should we continue to insist on the distinction between urban and rural?
2. Should we continue to insist on the distinction between academic and practitioner? How do we deal with the grey area?
3. We must continue to seek ways that academic knowledge can be made useful to practitioners. Can we think of strategies that will assist in knowledge translation?
4. How can the language of our Mission and Goals statement be simplified to appeal to practitioners but still retain meaningful distinctions that reflect current practice and academic study, e.g., “localised”?
5. Should the network be renamed to reflect different constructions that might arise from changes to the above?

The APCUS-SP Network

APCUS is a network of academics and practitioners that aims to bridge the practice-research divide across the whole of the humanitarian disaster management cycle: from preparedness and response, to recovery and development. Find out more about us at <http://apcus.cdmps.org.au/>.

APCUS seeks to develop channels for sharing knowledge between academic experts, governments, humanitarian emergency responders, recovery personnel, and development actors. These groups hold different bodies of knowledge that are rarely shared. A shared body of knowledge has the potential to improve all phases of humanitarian and development aid.

The APCUS network focuses particularly on urban shelter and settlements. Most knowledge has been developed for rural areas. New, multi-sector, area-based approaches for managing emergencies are needed for cities.

APCUS focuses in the first instance on the South Pacific because of the region’s emerging urban experience and vulnerability to disasters. However, it is open to any region in which current and future members express interest.

Working Proposals

In this report, we make a series of propositions about the value of APCUS-SP. We will test these propositions in an upcoming series of workshops with these stakeholders. The propositions are:

1. There are significant, missed moments of advocacy and opportunity during crises
2. Academics can contribute across the disaster management cycle
3. Humanitarians can help academics engage with and urgent social problems, and produce research with social impact
4. Existing academic-humanitarian and academic-development networks are ad hoc and, thus, less effective than they could be
5. Urban areas are often overlooked during humanitarian crises
6. Academics can help humanitarians and development actors to localise humanitarian response and development aid
7. The alliance of humanitarians and academics can help governments achieve stronger leadership and sovereignty in the uncertain aftermaths of humanitarian crises.

The Origins of APCUS-SP

The special need for an urban response network like APCUS-SP was born out of the experience of convenors Jennifer Day and Tom Bamforth during their engagement in the emergency response to Tropical Cyclone Pam, which struck the South Pacific in March 2015. Jennifer is an academic who happened to be in Port Vila, the capital city of Vanuatu, during the emergency response. Tom at the time was the Shelter Cluster Coordinator for the emergency response. The Shelter Cluster is a voluntary association of NGOs organised by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), IFRC, and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHCR). The Shelter Cluster is an association of emergency responders that coordinates emergency shelter assistance to ensure a fair and efficient distribution of aid.

One month after the cyclone, Jennifer documented that more than 6,000 people located within a 10-minute drive of the National Disaster Management Office of Vanuatu, in the peri-urban areas of Port Vila, had not received emergency shelter and food distributions. This was despite an active Shelter Cluster, more than 25 NGOs, and at least five country militaries (Australia, New Zealand, the USA, China, and Russia) offering emergency assistance and aid. The peri-urban communities of Blacksands and Manples had been overlooked by aid agencies and government. Many people had eaten nothing but stored rice for the past month and were still sleeping under leaky roofs in heavy rains. Consequently, Tom organised for 1,500 households to receive tarpaulins, building materials, and food. Part of the problem for Blacksands and Manples was that the Census estimates of population were outdated and inaccurate. The Shelter Cluster was working with population estimates for these peri-urban areas that enumerated the population at about one-third of the actual population.

From this experience, Jennifer and Tom imagined better links between academics and practitioners. Day, an academic researcher with knowledge about peri-urban communities but without humanitarian experience, struggled for some time to find a receptive agency to act on her information. Tom, unsure about the conditions in the peri-urban communities and busy managing a humanitarian response, was largely office-bound and reliant on information coming from other NGOs, government, and other humanitarians. Jennifer and Tom imagined a platform where he could have reached out to a network of academics for information on the population, tenure, and needs of Blacksands and Manples. They conceived APCUS from that experience.

Positioning among Existing Initiatives

APCUS-SP does not seek to reproduce significant and emerging urban work in the Pacific. Our particular goal is to better plug academic work into humanitarian response in Pacific cities. One goal of our workshops is to generate feedback from network members and potential members about whether we are seeking to provide a suite of services that is already being provided elsewhere. Our desktop research thus far suggests that APCUS fills a need, and the workshop findings presented in the next section corroborates the existence of that need. In this section, we describe some of the related initiatives and describe how APCUS-SP is positioned among them.

A number of organisations are already seeking to facilitate knowledge sharing for improved humanitarian response. The Global Alliance for Urban Crises (GAUC), for instance, “was established to bring together the different actors who can help to improve crisis preparedness and response in our increasingly urban world” (urbancrises.org). Like APCUS, GAUC was conceived to bring together actors that do not frequently or systematically work together. Unlike APCUS, however, GAUC’s approach is to recruit institutional members, e.g., NGOs, intergovernmental agencies, and

universities that then sign its charter and commit to working toward its goals and vision. APCUS, on the other hand, is a network of individuals. Those individuals may be affiliated with universities, but their membership and use of APCUS is not dependent on those affiliations. We note that APCUS is currently querying its membership to join GAUC.

There are other networks that seek to generate learning platforms and environments in which individuals can participate. The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) “is a global network of organizational and institutional NGOs, UN agencies, members of the Red Cross/Crescent Movement, donors, academics and consultants dedicated to learning how to improve response to humanitarian crises” (www.alnap.org). The Urban Response Community of Practice is an active network of individual humanitarians and organisations, and it provides the Urban Humanitarian Response Portal for network members to share knowledge on urban humanitarian crises (<http://www.urban-response.org/>). Both of these communities of practice have active listservs, like APCUS – and both allow academics to be members of the network. However, a key difference is that APCUS is particularly dedicated to facilitate better links between academics and humanitarians, governments, and civil-society organisations.

There are a number of humanitarian-focused research institutes based at universities, which are also working indirectly on facilitating better links between the academy and those organisations leading humanitarian responses. For instance, the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI) is a research centre that both provides training to humanitarians and research on humanitarian crises. Deakin University’s Centre for Humanitarian Leadership (CfHL) is a similar research and training institute that focuses on leadership in the humanitarian sector. APCUS is connected with both of these initiatives but does not aspire to training humanitarians or supporting research. Rather, we aspire to connect relevant academic knowledge to the appropriate stakeholders, assembling knowledge on-demand when required. The HHI does have a unit that assembles academic teams to conduct research during emergency responses, but it currently does not provide a platform for humanitarians to reach out to academics for information during humanitarian events. We see APCUS as a partner – not a competitor – to organisations like HHI and CfHL.

Think tanks and intergovernmental actors are also seeking to make links with academic institutions. The Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) seeks to generate policy-relevant research and academic engagement with the humanitarian sector. Its “aim is to inform and inspire principled humanitarian policy and practice and enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian action in saving lives and alleviating suffering” (<https://odihpn.org/event-report/improving-humanitarian-action-in-urban-areas-an-action-oriented-roundtable/>).

Notably, neither HPG nor any of the organisations listed above is focused on the Pacific. There are, however, Pacific-focused initiatives seeking to develop resilient cities and improve capacity in humanitarian crises. UN-ESCAP is currently working toward its 2019 *The Future of Asia and Pacific Cities 2019 Report: Thematic consultation on Smart Cities in Asia and the Pacific*. This report will be geared toward supporting national and local governments in planning for and resilient and inclusive cities. The Department of Public Affairs at the Australian National University is a research centre focused on applied research on state, society, and governance in the Pacific. DPA holds the annual conference, the *Pacific Update*, and publishes a series of periodicals including the *Development Bulletin*, a publication focused on Pacific development issues. Neither of these institutions is focused particularly linkages with academics to provide support across the humanitarian cycle, as is APCUS.

Perhaps most closely-aligned with APCUS’ mission is the Social Science in Humanitarian Action platform (<http://www.socialscienceinaction.org/about/>). Launched in early 2017, SSHA “aims to

establish networks of social scientists with regional and subject expertise to rapidly provide insight, analysis and advice, tailored to demand and in accessible forms, to better design and implement the social and communication dimensions of emergency responses.” Its Platform is a partnership between [UNICEF](#) and [Institute of Development Studies](#) at the University of Sussex, and it “will focus on developing orientation and capacity building of local researchers and partners to conduct rapid research and support field deployments.” SSHA is also a new initiative, and is also not focused particularly on the Pacific. APCUS will seek to link with this new program and to involve its stakeholders in APCUS.

In summary, then, APCUS-SP is distinguished from other organisations in its composition and foci. Our research network:

1. Is focused on academic linkages with other actors in humanitarian response
2. Is academy-led and comprised of individuals rather than organisations
3. Aspires to provide on-demand information across the humanitarian response cycle
4. Is focused on the Pacific
5. Is focused on cities.

An Urban Focus

APCUS focuses particularly on urban settlements – an area of humanitarian response and academic query where there is much to be gained from collaboration. Urban emergency response is complex, and the above example of poor information is common. Emergency responders and recovery personnel are highly-trained practitioner-experts who do sometimes-dangerous and critical humanitarian work, but who often lack the information they need to target lifesaving assistance and help put the urban population on a path of long-term recovery. Their work is complicated by complex custom land tenure systems that are often the product of oral tradition and customary practices (Bonnemaison, 1985; Jones, 2016) overlaid with a common law legal system – and rapid urbanisation. Urban growth outpaces rural growth in all eight countries except Samoa. This produces informal settlements that in some cases – Vanuatu, Kiribati, and the Marshall Islands – can exceed the densities in Hong Kong, but without the high-rise apartment buildings, and with very limited services. These informal settlements host a large portion of the urban population, yet most countries in the South Pacific do not have government ministries dedicated to urban development (Keen and Barbara, 2015). Also, while the training of aid workers is changing, the bulk of training and delivery models are still largely rural-focused – which means that aid workers do not often have an up-to-date working knowledge about how urban areas function during emergencies and as communities recover.

Starting Locally: Why the South Pacific?

We focus on the South Pacific as our place to prove the concept of APCUS-SP, for a number of reasons. The first reason is that the Network is crucial here. These vulnerable countries lack critical emergency-response capacity and yet are among the most vulnerable. Faced with climate change and increasingly-extreme weather events – and the usual earthquakes and volcanic eruptions – the Pacific is home to the two countries most vulnerable to natural disasters: Vanuatu and Tonga, according to the United Nations University *World Risk Report 2016* (Garschagen, Hagenlocher, Comes et al., 2016), with Oceania noted as a global hotspot.

The second reason we start in the South Pacific is that we already have significant expertise and links at the ready. The Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute has a network platform ready that it uses for another network that it hosts, the Pacific Constitutions Research Network

(www.paclii.org/pcn). Regarding expertise, Australia and New Zealand are the first high-income-country responders during emergencies in the region. There is a large amount of capacity among antipodean academics that is currently not being leveraged by NGOs and governments undertaking emergency responses.

The Second Workshop

This document reports on the second in a series of at least five workshops that are designed to bring stakeholders together to imagine and *coproduce* a process to leverage the knowledge of academics in crisis situations. Through these workshops, we are seeking to generate *coproduction capacities* (van Kerkhoff and Lebel, 2015) modelled on those sought at the interface of science and government, where knowledge and capabilities are generated collaboratively by stakeholders in a process of imagining and forming social change. That is, the first objective of our network will be to create a network of experience and trust that will compel emergency responders to reach out to academics for assistance during emergency response.

The full-day workshop plan is attached in Appendix A along with the information flyer that was circulated with the invitation. The goals of the APCUS portion of the workshop were to:

1. Explore how academic contributions to emergency response could be made more useful to NGOs and government
2. Collaborate on the mission statement of APCUS-SP (provided in Appendix B).

Seventeen participants attended the workshop. This included elected members of national and local governments and civil servants from Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tuvalu, Timor-Leste, Karibati, and the Solomon Islands – largely drawn from urban planning ministries and departments. Academics attended from the University of the South Pacific, Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand), and the Australian National University. Intergovernmental representatives attended from UNESCAP, the Asian Development Bank, and the German agency for international development. NGO participants included representatives from RedR, Australia, Habitat for Humanity, World Vision, Save the Children, and Live & Learn, Vanuatu. Civil society representative attended from the Pacific Conference of Churches.

In the workshop, participants engaged in two sessions. The first was a storytelling session, wherein participants were encouraged to tell stories about harnessed and missed opportunities to engage academics across the humanitarian intervention cycle. We used an Open Space Approach wherein participants circulated across five topics according to their preferences. Participants engaged in conversations about each topic:

1. **Before.** Preparedness, contingency, and resilience
2. **During and After.** Relief and recovery, and transition
3. **Urban.** Humanitarian action in urban settings
4. **Culture.** The organisational cultures from which the participants operate and their problems/incentives for collaboration in humanitarian response.

A rapporteur in each group recorded group and individual observations. Rapporteurs also noted the name and organisation of the person making the observation. Rapporteurs recorded narratives, successes, challenges, and recommendations. In a second session consisted of a reading and discussion of the Mission and Goals statement, and participants gave feedback.

2 WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

This section describes the outcomes of the workshop and post-workshop discussions. We organise this section of the report with the outcomes of the consultations, rather than with the Open Space content areas (before, during and after, urban, culture). We do this because the overlapping nature of the discussions would lead to much duplication of content were it organised according to the five Open Space themes. We also wish to highlight the lessons from the workshop and consultations rather than the organisational structure of the workshops. We describe the organisational structure of the workshops above in order to make clear the process by which we arrived at the conclusions we draw here. The major conclusions are as follows:

- The network should focus more broadly on settlements, rather than narrowly on shelter
- Use of terminology like, “city,” may be problematic in the Pacific
- Our mission must be more-clearly stated
- An academic-practitioner network can contribute across the humanitarian “cycle”
- We should carefully consider whether the academics-practitioner distinction is necessary
- Current academic-practitioner collaborations are constrained by institutions and the limits of personal networks
- We should consider whether the title of the network should focus on *who* is involved rather than the *what* we do
- We need to streamline and simplify our outreach language and consider doing so with the Mission and Goals statement.

Shift from Shelter to Settlements

We began the Workshop 1 with a different acronym: the Academic-Practitioner Collaboration for Urban *Shelter*, South Pacific. Out of the workshop, the proposal arose that we change the title of the network to include the word, settlements, rather than, shelter. This is consistent with the urban focus of APCUS and the general call for multi-sectoral, area-based urban response.

Resolve Problematic Distinctions between Urban and Rural

I don't like the term, “cities.” – Academic participant

Our participants in Workshop 2 echoed and expanded upon the above sentiments from a Pacific perspective. In particular, they took issue with applying Western conceptions of “city” and “urban,” and conversely, “rural,” to the Pacific region. They took issue with these terms for a number of reasons. First, some objected to the distinction between city/town and rural life in humanitarian response, noting the risk of aid and relief flowing to some groups and not others:

It is important to not separate urban and rural – talking about cities, and towns and villages as rural. There is a risk of missing out.

Others, continuing to explain the problems with distinguishing urban and rural life, noted that governance and cultural concerns do not necessarily concord neatly with urban and rural distinctions:

City boundaries can be very arbitrary in some Pacific countries. – Government participant

Residents of peri-urban areas come from rural areas. They don't leave their cultures behind. The built environment comes with them. – Government participant

In reference to the name of the network, one participant recommended language that encompasses the urban and the rural, and another objected to particular uses of the word, “settlement”:

What about “Human Settlements” in the Pacific. That covers villages and cities. – Government participant

“Settlement” calls up “informal settlement.” Different sectors use different words.

This objection to the distinction between city and rural in Workshop 2 stands in contrast to the consensus during Workshop 1. In Workshop 1 (29 May, 2018), participants agreed that cities and towns should be considered explicitly in humanitarian response. The difference may come from the composition of the groups. The participants in Workshop 1 were largely Melbourne-based academics and humanitarians. In Workshop 2, our participants were mostly lifetime residents of the Pacific.

Given the local knowledge and the strength of the consensus among this diverse, international group of Pacific Islanders, APCUS-SP must take this advice seriously. However, this is not an issue that will be easily resolved. Emerging advice from humanitarian organisations strongly aligned behind distinctions between urban and rural and the need for different kinds of humanitarian response targeted at cities. APCUS needs to continue to query its stakeholders to gain clarity on this discord between the two workshops.

We Should State Our Mission More Simply

A surprising event occurred in the middle of the Mission and Goals session: a miscommunication was unearthed. Prior to that moment, many of our workshop participants thought that we were selling APCUS-SP to them as a business venture – not a member-driven organisation designed to serve the members and communities. One government participant asked,

It’s not clear: is this a consultancy? Is this a voluntary service? What services are we offering? – Government participant

The group then began to discuss their impressions of APCUS. Others said they imagined, prior to this part of the discussion, that it would be two or three academics in an office charging for advice. Once I was able to clarify that we are not seeking to be a paid service, this clarity created debate and discussion around the following topics:

- 1) Agreement that there is value in academics participation across the humanitarian response “cycle”
- 2) Disagreement about the value of distinguishing between academic and practitioner
- 3) Consider a title that describes what the network does rather than who participates
- 4) Agreement that the mission statement should be streamlined and simplified to be accessible to a Pacific audience.

These four ideas are discussed in the following sections. The moment of clarity, however, raises interesting ideas about the next workshops. We must be sure to better explain the vision for APCUS as a member-driven service network rather than a venture.

An Academic-Practitioner Network Can Contribute Across the Humanitarian “Cycle”

Once the participants understood the purpose and intentions of the network, they agreed that there is a place for academics at each stage of the humanitarian process – from pre-planning to emergency to recovery and back to development. Not all of the actors saw a role for academics at each stage of their workflow. Some expressed hesitation at the idea that academics might be involved at the earliest, life-saving moments of an emergency. Others, however, saw the possibilities for academic intervention at this stage. As a group, we agreed that APCUS-SP should offer its members for planning and research across the humanitarian emergency cycle, including in preparedness:

Academics would be useful in mitigation and preparedness because that is where there is no funding. Usually funding stops and there is no money for M&E. Longer-term measurements are needed to inform future disaster response. – NGO participant

Some of our participants described situations that occurred during emergency response where they imagined academic input would have been useful and transformative:

Habitat for Humanity doesn’t work with academics. When we’re going in response mode, there is a lack of capacity to write proposals. Getting the baseline data [is difficult]. – NGO participant

Going into the shelter cluster in Honiara – there were no locals in there. But all the leads were foreigners. People were parachuted in but don’t have connection to local staff and communities. We started designing shelter for Build Back Better – people with no context. There was no connection with design people at a local level, no advice about best practice local materials and architecture so it would be quicker. Everyone was concentrated in Honiara, so people only were focused on building their own houses immediately, never mind reaching out further to help organisations collect data or design a new practice. – NGO participant

When we were discussing [a solid waste initiative after TC Winston in Fiji] five months later, we realised we didn’t capture data on creeks, rivers and drainage – we needed more funding. We made an estimation, and through that we were able to get \$895,000. But if we captured data earlier, we could have got more precise data and then procured more funds. That data had fortunately been collected elsewhere, but that was a fluke – should have been in our planning. Fiji’s bigger developments are close to waterways so it should be a big consideration. – Government participant

Many of our participants noted the usefulness of academic knowledge and processes for post-event reflection:

As a councillor and being from Ambae, I was with NDMO and with clusters and, every day, I appealed to the clusters to attend to the needs to the people of Ambae.... I had to house relatives who came from the island. And I asked the government and clusters as well to provide additional support such as food and mattresses. My mother passed away in my home. [There were] 14 to 16 people coming in and out of my home. -- Hon. Renata Netaf, Deputy Mayor, Luganville, Vanuatu

[There is a] need to look at the physiological impacts of loss of life, assets and well being. [During the] tsunami in Samoa, trauma was felt by people, and support to these people was not forthcoming. Issues of dealing with mental issues during and after an events: this is a missed

opportunity. Academia need to look at this area; carry out research/ information based system on how to prepare PICs to respond to such kind of traumatic issues. – Government participant

Some academics can capture these stories. Then, this could be used to influence future policy. If there is strong enough evidence, academics can capture this and show that we may be ignoring the most vulnerable after a disaster relief. – Government participant

Many implementers described the value to their organisations in involving academics to evaluate programs and to help governments reflect on their practice for better response in the next event:

We... developed a training program. It was twofold: build stronger shelter, but to teach people, community carpenters, how to build back safer. By using those skills in building, they would then directly pass them along in their own communities. Designing implementation to meet goals was actually trial and error. 110 houses built, we learned as we went. Collaborating with other NGOs and the Cluster, so it was experience-led rather than scientifically accurate.... Would have been much better to have academic input about best practice. We made it up. – NGO participant

During Cyclone Gita (2017), questions were raised as to why people were not receiving sufficient help. Lack of understanding on how response was prioritized: a potential area for academics to facilitate advocacy and help government effectively prioritize areas during response/recovery efforts. – Government participant

Other implementers described the value to communities and governments to make sure that displaced communities are supported when they are positioned outside of the ready view of governments. This includes academic reflection on how communities are affected by crisis:

A lot of the public service roles come with housing. When those houses are damaged, those families move into other houses, often far away – so the public service roles are therefore moved far away. This contributes to a system break down because the location of public services is not prioritised. It's important to prioritise public services remaining in the region so everything else can become functional again. To create an effective disaster response, that accommodation needs to be prioritised so public service can come back online. We can supply tents forever, but we need to ensure the services and the public servants are close by. – NGO respondent

An NGO participant objected to the use of the language, “cycle” or “humanitarian emergency response cycle.” We inserted this language to query our stakeholders about the value of academic inputs at various stages of humanitarian emergencies, from resilience planning to early response to later response, and as the locale recovers and turns back to long-term development. The objection from this participant drew broad agreement that the term implies a fatalistic, pessimistic vision for the future:

The language of “cycle” suggests places are going from disaster to disaster. No mention of mitigation or prevention. – NGO participant

This objection to the use of the language, “cycle,” because it implies a course that will not be interrupted, is contradicted in the findings from the first workshop. In Workshop 1, participants encouraged us to expand the network beyond the original scope of emergency-phase engagement, to also include preparedness, recovery, and the path back to development. How will deal with the idea of a cycle is a space we will need watch in upcoming workshops.

Clarify the Value of Distinguishing Academic and Practitioners

The workshop participants disagreed about the value of distinguishing “academic” from “practitioner.” These findings suggest that, at very least, APCUS may need to be more clear about what we mean by the term, “academic.” We may also need to rethink this distinction entirely or clarify why this distinction is useful. How much we focus on the distinction between academics and practitioners is a query for subsequent workshops. Here, we report the discussion, which we will seek to clarify and understand in future workshops.

While some participants clearly see the distinction between academics and practitioners, others did not see the distinction as meaningful. This difficulty in distinguishing academics from practitioners occurs for a number of reasons. First and most fundamentally, I myself was not clear about what I meant by, “academic,” until that question was asked by a participant. In designing the workshop questions, I presumed an academic to be a person with a full-time, university appointment with responsibilities in teaching and research, and without an ongoing affiliation with other organisations, e.g., NGOs, government, intergovernmental agencies. However, I never articulated that proposition. Then, a participant asked how we identify an academic and distinguish her from, for example, someone with a PhD working in the UN or in government. Is an academic, she asked, only someone working at a university? Some academics have part-time roles in government, she pointed out.

A second reason why the distinction problematic is that many academics are already working in the disaster space. They work particularly as consultants to NGOs and intergovernmental agencies and advisors to government. One participant from Honiara described the role of academics in the 50 years’ floods that occurred in April 2014 in the city. Lands owned by the Solomon National University were used to set up emergency shelter, and academics participated in the disaster committee. Practitioners are accustomed to working with academics, and they often do so by hiring them for projects and advisory positions:

We hire academics because we need so much information. How is this providing something different than that? – NGO participant

A third reason why the distinction is problematic is that people may simply see academics as another type of practitioner – perhaps because of academics’ sometimes-dual roles as consultants and advisors:

Academics and practitioners go together. Practitioners at the government may think of them as just different layers. – Government participant

Not all participants disagreed with that the distinction between academic and practitioner is troubling. These non-academic participants see the academic role as I see it:

An academic is someone who does research; people who come and do a study. – Government participant

Academics do two things: teaching and research. – Government participant

One NGO participant acknowledged the spirit of APCUS as conceived by the original organisers: to unlock the academic knowledge that is currently available but not used:

If you take the term, academic, out, you lose the specialness of the network. – NGO

participant

Other participants agreed, beginning to identify particular areas where they see academic assistance as useful:

Marine resources could be one area where we need academics contribute. – Government participant

Academics would be useful in mitigation and preparedness because that is where there is no funding. Usually funding stops and there is no money for M&E. We need longer-term measurements to be able to inform future disaster response. – NGO participant

Current Collaborations are Constrained by Organisations and Limited Networks

In the Workshop 1 report, we concluded that academic-practitioner collaborations tend to be ad-hoc or based on individual relationships or institutional arrangements. We agree that there are appropriate uses for all of these types of relationships. We also think that there is a need for a network where knowledge free from institutional constraints and shared between individuals or institutions as necessary. We also think that there is a need to widen the number of individual relationships or provide a platform to give academics and practitioners wider access to each other. Filling those gaps is an aspiration of APCUS-SP.

Our Workshop 2 participants agreed with these sentiments. Some of our Workshop 2 participants highlighted how collaborations can be organised with arrangements between institutions like a single university and an organisation:

We do work with academics. For instance, we work with International Water Center and Monash University [on] WASH in informal settlements. [There is an] implementation part and a research part. These academics provide technical support, data tools, and assist in data collection. – NGO participant

Finding ways around institutional constraints is important because, for various reasons, information often remains in the domain of particular institutions. One NGO participant noted the competitiveness engendered by the grant-writing and funding environment in which NGOs must function, concluding that this is one reason why information is not shared:

For NGOs and governmental departments, accessing data can be very difficult because of bureaucracy. Organizational culture in this organization actually does not promote the sharing of data to other organizations. – NGO participant

There was a similar sentiment from within government:

We still have problems with data sharing. Other government departments don't share data willingly. Significant bureaucracy in terms of data sharing. Plans were being sold for revenue generation but not anymore. – Government participant

Informal settlement in urban areas should be the major focus, [but] who should be the one analysing and do research in this settlements? Government agencies have resource inventory (data pools), and this could be academics entry points to use this data and create knowledge and should be consistently done. [This will prevent] issues that might arise relates to data sharing (territorial) with others. – Major donor participant

Unlike government and NGO knowledge, the general feeling about academic knowledge is that it is not constrained by institutional cultures, but rather by its narrowness and inaccessibility for practitioners:

Academic topics are very specific. And also finding out who is actually doing different types of work. Who is the contact person for particular topics? NRI [the PNG National Research Institute, a government-funded public-policy think tank] does a lot of research but a lot of it is not relevant to what's practically done on the ground. – Intergovernmental participant

This is an important lesson for APCUS. Academic knowledge is needed in humanitarian response, but it needs to be made accessible in ways that are useful to practitioners. This will be an ongoing task for our members – to continue finding ways to make these links.

Clarify whether the Academic-Practitioner Collaboration Really Our Focus

There was discussion and disagreement about whether we should reframe the name of the network to be more focused on what the network *does* rather than *who* is involved. A number of participants agreed that assembly and presentation of information for humanitarian responses is already an ongoing project by many organisations, and academics are not necessarily required for this task.

At this point, no academics disagreed. This is a point of departure from Workshop 1, where academic participants felt strongly that they hold specific knowledge that could assist in humanitarian situations, and which is currently not in use by implementers. This is an area that we should explore in future workshops. As an organiser of the network and an academic, I am inclined to agree with the academic voices from Workshop 1 – though I acknowledge my bias and preconceived notions here – and with the sentiments of one participant:

If you take the term, academic, out, you lose the specialness of the network. – NGO participant

One reason, perhaps, that the academic participants in the workshop did not speak out to disagree was that there were only five full-time academics in the room: three of them were PhD students, one was a full-time academic, and one was me – the facilitator. The room dynamic was influenced by the larger numbers of practitioners.

Streamline and Simplify Our Identity

The Pacific Islander participants generally agreed that the Mission and Goals statement needs to be simplified for the Pacific audience:

Too wordy. To get a vision across, you need to simplify it for islanders, and others. Many difficult words. – Government participant

“Generative,” “Localised”: Are there simpler words that can be used?

This latter statement sits in direct contradiction to the consensus at the previous Workshop 1, where there was insistence on use of the terms, “localised” and “resilient,” for instance. This likely reflects the different audience. Given that the group attending Workshop 2 was largely from Pacific island governments and other agencies, this is an important lesson that represents, perhaps, a fundamental difficulty that academics have in relating to practitioners. This difficulty is in translating academic

knowledge into information that is usable by practitioners. This will be an ongoing challenge for APCUS – and one where we may focus efforts once the network is established.

3 NEXT STEPS

This section outlines APCUS-SP's next actions and the current articulation of our vision that frames those actions.

Goals and Challenges

We go forward with the following goal:

Our goal is to link academic knowledge with humanitarian and government actors toward:

1. Pre-disaster planning for urban shelter and settlements, emergency preparedness, and recovery
2. On-demand assembly of information about good practice and the urban context during humanitarian emergencies
3. On-demand assistance to develop and critique humanitarian strategies as emergencies develop
4. Stronger community engagement in crafting recovery and development strategies
5. Better-informed academic research agendas that deliver results relevant to practitioner experience
6. Improved access to information and actors for academics researching humanitarian emergency management.

We acknowledge these challenges in operationalizing our efforts:

1. Existing knowledge and knowledge sources are not effectively catalogued or understood in many settings
2. Academic knowledge is often not presented in a way that is humanitarians can readily use.
3. There are narrow windows for information assembly in humanitarian situations.
4. Academics may work differently and use different vocabulary than development and humanitarian actors.
5. Funding models and response procedures are rural-focused and reflect entrenched interests.
6. Governments must lead humanitarian efforts; humanitarians must not create parallel systems.

Ongoing Queries

This workshop report generated the following queries, which should be addressed in future workshops:

6. Should we continue to insist on the distinction between urban and rural?
7. Should we continue to insist on the distinction between academic and practitioner? How do we deal with the grey area?
8. We must continue to seek ways that academic knowledge can be made useful to practitioners. Can we think of strategies that will assist in knowledge translation?
9. How can the language of our Mission and Goals statement be simplified to appeal to practitioners but still retain meaningful distinctions that reflect current practice and academic study, e.g., "localised"?
10. Should the network be renamed to reflect different constructions that might arise from changes to the above?

Continue to Engage Stakeholders: Short-term activities

In 2018, APCUS-SP will perform these activities:

1. We will continue to grow our base with a mailing list where members can exchange information and seek partnerships
2. We will continue to consult our stakeholders for their input on the organization Mission and Goals, activities, and resourcing
3. We will establish a Steering Committee to guide future iterations of the Mission and Goals and organisational direction.

Our upcoming events are:

1. Melbourne Roundtable, hosted by the Centre for Disaster Management and Public Administration (24 Sept 2018)
2. Vanuatu Workshop (October/November 2018, TBD)
3. Canberra Roundtable Looking to the Future; Building Network Alliances (August 2019).

Establishing a Steering Committee

The lack of consensus on many questions, and the disagreement among participants in the two workshops, suggests that it is now time to assemble a Steering Committee to guide APCUS-SP. This will be a challenging task. Our members are scattered geographically across the Pacific and throughout Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere in the world. Internet connectivity is unreliable for many of our participants. In the interim, Jennifer Day will establish an interim committee tasked to assemble the Steering Committee. She will also conduct member outreach to generate ideas on how the Steering Committee should be assembled and organised.

Further revision of the Mission and Goals statement will not be undertaken until this committee is assembled.

Grow, Deliver, and Test: Medium-term aims and ambitions

Ultimately, according to NGOs we have consulted in this process, a network like APCUS-SP could find value globally. Our organisers have ambitions to generate a worldwide support network linking academics to humanitarian emergency responders. We will use the South Pacific as a proof-of-concept with a view to expanding the network in future. We will build on the RSA Network grant to generate more funds to support APCUS-SP. We plan to leverage APCUS-SP to demonstrate the concept and apply for grant or government funding to establish longer-term funding for the Network. The name of the network itself is designed to be modular: We have already spoken to colleagues in China and Afghanistan who would like to start APCUS-East Asia and APCUS-Central Asia branches. A logical next partnership would be with the Pacific Disaster Center at the University of Hawaii – an agency to which we already have links.

Given the possible need outside the Pacific, a major point of debate among APCUS-SP organisers was in how we should start and how we should plan to grow. In addition to the current proposed format that is geographically-focused on the South Pacific, we also considered starting with a global platform first, but focusing on South Pacific academic institutions as partners. We decided instead

to focus our efforts on the South Pacific and expand the network later to other universities and other geographies. Our culminating event in Canberra will showcase the successes of APCUS-SP, galvanise potential supporting agencies, and assemble partnerships and funding to expand the network across the globe to other regions and other universities. We will draw a speaker to who can inspire our community of academics and practitioners.

4 ATTACHMENTS

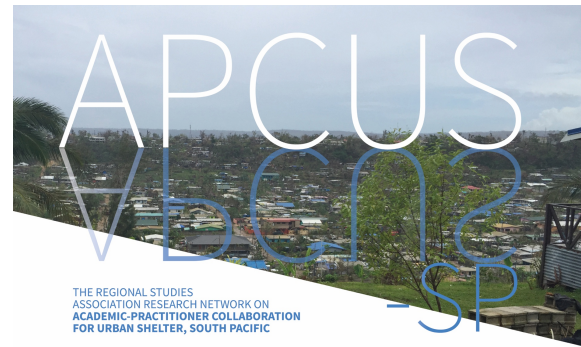
APPENDIX A. Workshop Plan

APPENDIX B. Original Mission and Goals Statement

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APPENDIX A. Workshop Invitation and Plan



The Future of Pacific Cities: Innovative Solutions for Sustainable Urbanization in the Pacific

2018 July 4 (TBC)
Venue TBC, Suva, Fiji

Background

Building on the momentum from Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific and Fiji's championing of the Ocean Pathway at COP23, fresh approaches to urban development are needed in the Pacific. Their size, geographic isolation, and dependence on natural resources in a changing climate present a multitude of challenges for sustainable development for Pacific cities in small island developing States (SIDS). The Pacific has the highest urbanization rate of global SIDS today (at 4.3 per cent per year¹), with 50 per cent of the population living in coastal settlements.² Reefs, mangroves and coastal ecosystems that provide the first line of defense for island coasts from saltwater inundation and storms are being lost to unplanned urban expansion. Vital urban infrastructure and livelihoods are increasingly threatened by climate change, with disaster risks outpacing resilience and annual economic losses from disasters expected to cost SIDS almost 4 per cent of their GDP.³ Coastal land loss caused by sea-level rise is projected to have widespread adverse consequences for Pacific SIDS.

Event

ESCAP and the Academic-Practitioner Collaboration for Urban Shelter, South Pacific (APCUS-SP) will host a meeting to review the challenges and future opportunities in Pacific cities, to critically assess knowledge and best practices of the means of implementation across a range of urban sustainability areas. Stakeholder inputs will inform two initiatives:

- 1) A major report ESCAP is producing, titled the *Future of Asia and Pacific Cities 2019* Report. This report will then inform the 5th Pacific Urban Forum (2019) and the 7th Asia-Pacific Urban Forum (2019). It will be a policy advocacy report intended to support national and local governments in long-term thinking and inclusive decision-making to advance resilient and sustainable cities.
- 2) The charter and direction of APCUS-SP. This is a new research network dedicated to bridging [the practice-research divide across humanitarian emergency management – in preparedness and response, and from recovery to development](#). We seek to develop channels for sharing knowledge between academic experts, governments, civil society, humanitarian emergency responders, recovery personnel, and development actors. Linking these groups is vital because they hold different bodies of knowledge that are rarely shared. This workshop will shape the charter of our organization.

¹ UN Habitat (2015), *Urbanization and Climate Change in Small Island Developing States*. Nairobi.

² World Resources Institute (2011), *Reefs at Risk Revisited: Pacific*. Washington.

³ ESCAP (2018), *Asia-Pacific Disaster Report 2017: Disaster Resilience for Sustainable Development*. Bangkok.



Sessions

| | |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:00 – 9:10 | Welcome remarks: ESCAP/EPO |
| 9:10 – 9:30 | Presentation <i>Future of Asia and Pacific Cities 2019</i> (FoAPC): Omar Siddique <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative and focus areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ City governance and capacities for resilient cities ○ Leveraging urban finance ○ Stronger urban data and technologies for smart cities ○ Integrated urban/territorial planning |
| 9:30 – 10:15 | Group discussions: Solutions for means of implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 1: Cities governance and capacities • Group 2: Urban finance • Group 3: Urban data and technologies • Group 4: Integrated planning |
| 10:15 – 10:30 | Coffee break |
| 10:30 – 11:15 | Plenary group discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of groups 1, 2, 3, 4 • Reactions, Q&A • Feedback on FoAPC narrative and chapter content |
| 11:15 – 11:30 | Closing of FoAPC: ESCAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next steps • Transition to <i>Academic-Practitioner Collaboration for Urban Shelter in the South Pacific</i> (APCUS-SP) |
| 11:30 – 12:30 | Lunch break |
| 12:30 – 13:00 | Introduction to APCUS-SP: Jennifer Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives and outcomes, funding and ethics (5 min) • Logic Model (10 min) • Presentation: Storytelling to find opportunities (10 min) • The Open Space approach (5 min) |
| 13:00 – 14:30 | Lessons and Critical Gaps from Past Disasters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group feedback on Open Space content areas (10 min) • Storytelling with the Open Space approach (60 min) • What's next? (20 min) |
| 14:30 – 14:45 | Coffee break |
| 14:45 – 16:15 | APCUS-SP Mission and Goals discussion |
| 16:15 – 16:30 | Closing |

APPENDIX B. Mission and Goals Statement



THE REGIONAL STUDIES
ASSOCIATION RESEARCH NETWORK ON
**ACADEMIC-PRACTITIONER COLLABORATION
FOR URBAN SHELTER, SOUTH PACIFIC**

We are a network of academics and practitioners that aims to bridge the practice-research divide across humanitarian emergency management – from preparedness to response, recovery, and back to development. We enable knowledge exchange between academic experts and governments, civil society organisations, humanitarian emergency responders, recovery personnel, and development actors. Linking these groups is vital because they hold different bodies of knowledge that are rarely shared. Producing a shared body of knowledge will impact all phases of humanitarian and development aid. Our network focuses particularly on urban shelter and settlements because new ways of managing emergencies are urgently needed in cities. We focus on the South Pacific because of the region’s emerging urban experience and vulnerability to disasters.

We aim to break the organizational silos and provide for generative, localised, consultative, interdisciplinary, and inter-sector urban humanitarian response where all actors rely on evidence, seek new knowledge, and fearlessly reflect on their practice – so that cities thrive.

Goal

Our goal is to link academic knowledge with humanitarian and government actors toward:

1. Pre-disaster planning for urban shelter and settlements, emergency preparedness, and recovery
2. On-demand assembly of information about good practice and the urban context during humanitarian emergencies
3. On-demand assistance to develop and critique humanitarian strategies as emergencies develop
4. Stronger community engagement in crafting recovery and development strategies
5. Better-informed academic research agendas that deliver results relevant to practitioner experience
6. Improved access to information and actors for academics researching humanitarian emergency management.

Challenges

We face certain challenges in operationalizing our efforts. These include:

1. Existing knowledge and knowledge sources are not effectively catalogued or understood in many settings
2. Academic knowledge is often not presented in a way that is humanitarians can readily use.
3. There are narrow windows for information assembly in humanitarian situations.
4. Academics may work differently and use different vocabulary than development and humanitarian actors.
5. Funding models and response procedures are rural-focused and reflect entrenched interests.
6. Governments must lead humanitarian efforts; humanitarians must not create parallel systems.