

The Value of Partnership Working during Flood Recovery: Done *with* or done *to*?

Alison McNulty & Kimberley Rennick



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Background

Amongst other objectives, this research sought to:

- Examine the presence of community resilience before, during and after flooding
- Assess the possible links between the types of support provided to flood affected communities and the building of community resilience



Methods

- Approach: Community based participatory research (CBPR)
- Six study sites selected across the United Kingdom based on experience of flooding, presence of known flood groups, and geographical spread
- Data collection methods varied due to the CBPR approach: questionnaires (5 of 6), interviews (5 of 6) or focus groups (2 of 6)
- Stakeholders from statutory and voluntary organisations interviewed across all study sites



Participants

- 67 completed questionnaires, 72 face to face interviews, and 5 focus groups with people who had experienced flooding
- 5 completed questionnaires and 1 focus group people who were at risk but had not been flooded (from Norfolk)
- 3 facilitated groups with school children
- 16 telephone interviews with key stakeholders



Findings: Overview

- Strong presence of community resilience indicators within communities:
- **Social capital**
- **Community efficacy**
- Readiness to respond
- Learning



Findings: Overview

- Resilience appears to 'peak' in the immediate aftermath – meaning that long-term preparedness can be a challenge
- Effective partnership working can help to grow and sustain resilience and maintain momentum between flood events

Findings: Social Capital

- Evidence of strong social capital at the time of flooding – ‘Dunkirk spirit’
- 89% believed that the community would be **willing to help** in an emergency
- 76% felt that community members would **watch out for each other**
- 73% felt a **sense of belonging**



Findings: Community Efficacy

- Evident but less strongly reported than social capital
- 78% felt others could rely on them better since the flood
- 24% felt they could not rely on each other at all
- 67% felt that the community would come together to work as a team in an emergency
- Only 54% felt it was very likely that their community would take action in a flood



Challenges to building resilience

- Floods **initially brought people together** but the effect petered out
- 81% were not members of community resilience groups
- A quarter were not aware that a community group had been set up
- **The majority are not providing input into these groups or benefitting from their existence**
- **Learning is not always shared amongst the community**

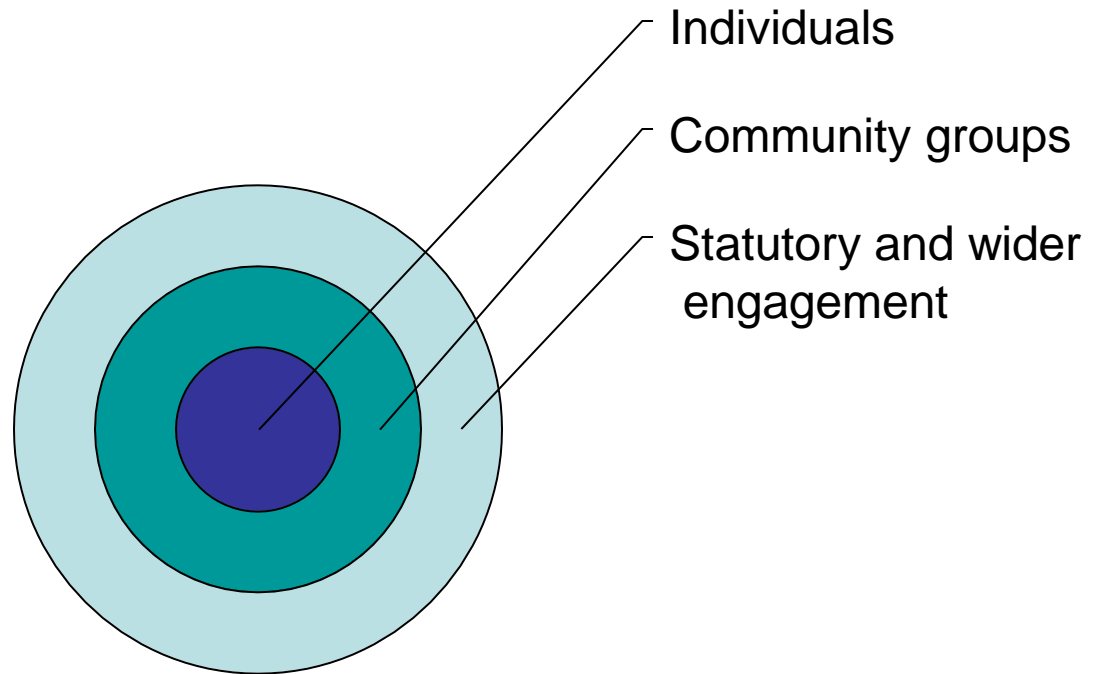


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How partnership working is enhancing resilience

1. Engagement between individuals and their community
2. Engagement between community and external agencies



Partnerships: Individuals within the wider community

Individuals felt better prepared *due* to community level action

- Having flood wardens
- Putting together flood plans
- Raising awareness of how people can prepare

Sustained improvements in social capital occurred when facilitated by community groups

There is a need for risk to be engaged with at an individual level – findings support idea that there is a role for a trusted voice to heighten this awareness



Partnerships: Communities and external agencies

- Utilising links with other agencies to promote learning and efficacy
- Acting as a conduit for information and action
- Enabling the bulk procurement of flood protection devices
- Lobbying for a grant to provide IPP free of charge
- Funding to support the sustaining of flood warden skills



The value of partnerships at two levels

- Community groups are most effective when integrated with other public services and agencies
- Because...where these relationships had been forged, they had **more control to take action**
- Because... **local knowledge** within communities helped to shape the way that other agencies provided support
- Recovery is working **with** communities, not something that is done to them

