Island Affairs

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Updates at http://www.islandvulnerability.org/affairs.html

Background

Mosteiros, São Miguel, the Azores (2003).

The "Affairs" approach is one format amongst many which permits disaster researchers and practitioners to think beyond their usual topics and to better integrate disaster-related aspects into other activities. Focusing on a theme such as islands provides a common basis for discussion to connect people from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints.

Structure

Island Affairs' first step is an information resource through questions answered at three levels:
1. A one-page summary highlighting policy and practice implications.
2. An article, usually 3-5 pages, in plain language.
3. A detailed, academic approach with formal references, such as peer-reviewed journal papers.

Twillingate Island, Newfoundland (2005).

Template

Overall Approach
Topics 1 and 2 relate to studies, research, information, analysis.
Topics 3 and 4 relate to practice, action, implementation, operations.
Topic 5 links the two areas.
Questions listed here are illustrative, not comprehensive.

Topic 1: Islands
•The basic elements for learning about and from islands.
1. Definition: What are islands? Where are islands?
2. Importance: Why are islands important? What do islands offer?
3. Numbers: How many islands and islanders of which categories?

Topic 2: Physical and Social Islands
•Physical: biosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, atmosphere, and transition zones.
•Social: culture, history, knowledge, sociology.
1. How does the physical shape the social?
2. How does the social shape the physical?

Topic 3: Island Life
•Livelihoods (including economies), habitats, and their interaction.
•Changes and transformations.
•Extremes and variabilities in the physical and social dimensions.
•Ethics.
•People, families, communities, societies, networks, and skills.
1. How do links (e.g. bridge, airport, internet) affect island life?
2. How is inter-island vs intra-island conflict/peace managed?
3. How are diseconomies of scale advantageous?

Topic 4: Island Governance
•Decision-making, politics, policy, and law at the community, sub-national, national, regional, and international levels.
•Institutions, processes, methods, people, teams, and leadership.
1. How is sub-national island governance addressed?
2. How is archipelago governance addressed?
3. How do islands govern their mainland territories?
4. How does kinship affect decision-making?

Topic 5: Island Interaction
•Specific examples of interaction amongst the topics, for example how the social and physical characteristics of islands lead to island life (topic 3) and how island governance (topic 4) arises from the what, why, and where of islands (topic 1).
•Cross-cutting issues which have not been addressed elsewhere, with possibilities being ecodiversity, energy, gender, health, island futures, minorities, natural resource management, sustainability on various time scales, technology, traditional knowledges, and water.
•Communication within, across, and outside of islands.
1. How do and should research and practice connect?
2. What vulnerabilities and capabilities exist for each issue?

Method questions
Will disaster risk reduction be sufficiently addressed?
Are the questions and proposed answer format feasible and useful?
Will those with island interests be brought together while informing others about what islands can offer?

Future

Seymour Norte, Galápagos (2004).

Other possible outputs:
•Bibliographies.
•A formal training and education curriculum.
•CDs, DVDs, and websites with the material.
All material must remain public domain but recognize islanders' ownership of it. For substantive results, contributions and collaborations are needed.

Some Sources

•Glantz, 2003, *Climate Affairs*, Island Press.
•International Center for Desert Affairs, China.
•Island Studies http://www.islandstudies.ca
•Lewis, 1999, *Dev. in Disaster-Prone Places*, ITP.
•McCall, 1994, "Nissology" (The study of islands), *Journal of the Pacific Society*, 17(2-3): 93-106.
•University of Malaya's Centre for Climate Affairs.

Pangaimotu Island, Tonga (2004).