

Capacities and needs are important for flood and drought risk reduction

Why did we undertake this study?

Scientific and intergovernmental communities internationally have argued that a cross-pollination of disaster risk reduction and human development processes could lessen future flood and drought impacts. Yet, many of the social, economic, and political levers characterizing disaster risk reduction and human development are detached in governance and management.

How was it done?

We surveyed and interviewed government practitioners in local, provincial/state, and federal agencies in Canada and Australia. We assessed their views on an integrated approach between disaster risk reduction and human development. Explored areas included: the importance of an integrated approach; the boundaries and requirements for an integrated approach; the role of human development in such a system; and the associated challenges in disaster risk governance.

What did we find?

Government practitioners suggested an integrated approach is a necessary step to improving disaster risk governance systems. In particular:

- Disaster risk reduction requires a broader engagement with human development systems in ways that are adaptable to local contexts, including targeting vulnerability and agency in planning and preparedness;
- Such arrangements must be reflected in legislative and policy frameworks, based on evidence, and extend across sectors and policy areas.

Our results show the importance of developing approaches to disaster risk governance that reflect the capacities and needs of individuals and vulnerable populations.

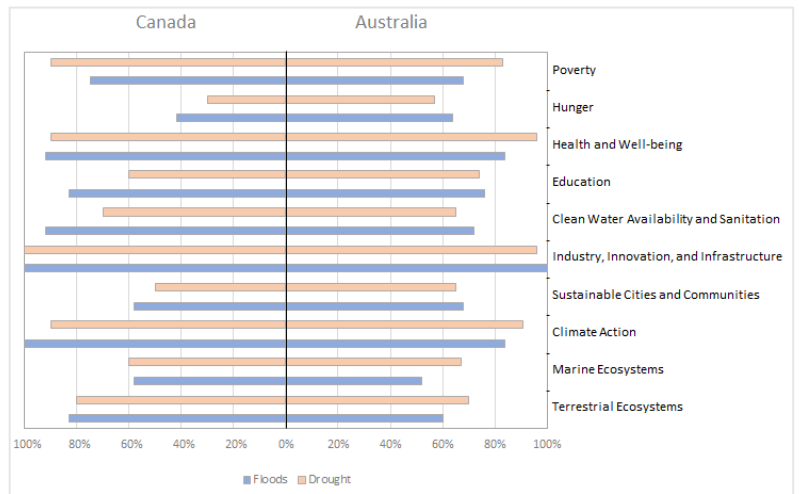


Figure 1: Importance of human development considerations in flood and drought planning and preparedness

What are the implications?

Transitioning from traditional disaster management approaches towards innovations in disaster risk governance could increase disaster resilience in Canada and Australia. The findings of this study highlight the importance of transformative approaches to disaster risk governance that are centred on addressing vulnerability and human agency. Further research is needed on the efficacy of such approaches within the current systems across government jurisdictions and related policy areas.

Want more information?

The full paper is available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crm.2021.100291>

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Coastal Governance: Embracing Vulnerability and Change

