

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Bradford		
Unit of Assessment: C19 Politics and International Studies		
Title of case study: Community Engagement and Partnership Working in UK Climate Adaptation: Assessing and Enhancing Readiness		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2010-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Rhys Kelly	Senior Lecturer in Conflict Resolution	2004 – present
Dr Ute Kelly	Lecturer in Peace Studies	2000-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2018-ongoing		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>The case study describes the impact arising from a three-year (2018-2021) action research project commissioned by the Environment Agency (England) and Natural Resources Wales and undertaken in close partnership with Icarus (a stakeholder engagement consultancy). This project has engaged Risk Management Authorities, key stakeholders and local communities in two pilot locations in England, working together to a. understand the impact of climate change on flood and coastal erosion risks in England and Wales, and b. develop and test new thinking and practice for collaborative problem-solving and decision-making in and with affected communities. Insights from this research have gone on to influence Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) policy and practice in England and Wales.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Climate change is creating difficult adaptation challenges for communities around the world. In the UK, increased flood risk, coastal change and sea level rises are among the main predicted impacts. For communities facing the likelihood of more regular and severe flooding, this is generating uncertainty and anxiety. For professionals working in Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM), it presents a difficult set of stakeholder engagement challenges, particularly as it will not be possible to meet expectations for long-term protection in all locations. This is largely uncharted territory, with clear potential for conflict.</p> <p>In this context, the Environment Agency (England) (EA) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) commissioned us to carry out an Evidence Review to identify key challenges and best practice as part of a bigger project that we are also involved in: 'Working together to adapt to a changing climate: Flood and coast'. Our previous research – including publications and expertise on conflict engagement, social learning, dialogue and deliberation (1), social-ecological resilience (2) and difficult conversations around climate change (3) - put us in a good position to contribute insights that enhanced existing knowledge within these agencies.</p> <p>Our Evidence Review (4) systematically analysed an extensive literature of over 300 sources, ranging from internal EA and NRW documents to practitioner and research papers from across the world. The evidence review clarified the nature of evolving engagement needs in a context of climate change. It also outlined practical approaches and key questions for consideration and made concrete recommendations that fed into the next stages of the project.</p>		

One of our key research insights centred around the ‘readiness’ of communities, key stakeholders and professionals to collaborate in the management of flood and coastal erosion risk, particularly in the face of changing future trajectories (4). The evidence analysed in our report showed that successful climate adaptation planning requires:

- collective literacy about environmental issues, including anticipated impacts of climate change and the realistic assessment of mitigation efforts.
- collective awareness of local risks and the need for adaptation.
- opportunities to identify and work through emotional and/or psychological responses to difficult knowledge.
- capacity for an informed appraisal of different options for adaptation and their implications for different stakeholder groups.
- capacity to collaborate with others in decision-making for their community.
- trust in adaptation planning processes and the decisions resulting from them.
- capacities for the constructive exploration of conflict, disagreement and divisions.

Subsequent action research in two communities corroborated this finding. Between January and September 2020, we developed and piloted a Readiness Assessment methodology in two locations in the UK (a semi-urban setting in Surrey and a coastal town in Norfolk). This pilot work tested a relatively simple toolkit (5) – involving self-assessment, interviews, a survey and stakeholder workshops – that FCERM professionals can use to assess how ‘ready’ stakeholders and community members are to engage in planning and decision-making for climate adaptation. Our findings (6) highlighted a. the wide variability of ‘readiness’ in a given context, and b. the value of learning about levels of knowledge, emotional states, capacities, etc prior to beginning conversations about difficult climate adaptation choices.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Kelly, Ute with Lisa Cumming (2010) *Civil society: supporting dialogue and deliberation*. Commissioned by Carnegie UK Trust as part of the Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland. <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/civil-society-supporting-dialogue-and-deliberation/>
2. Kelly, Rhys and Ute Kelly (2017) Resilience, Solidarity, Agency – Grounded reflections on challenges and synergies. *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses* (Special Issue: Resilience, Political Action and Solidarity). <https://doi.org/10.1080/21693293.2016.1228156>
3. Kelly, Rhys and Ute Kelly (2020) Becoming vulnerable in the era of climate change: Questions and dilemmas for a pedagogy of vulnerability, in: Brantmeier, Edward and Maria McKenna (2020) *Pedagogy of Vulnerability*. Information Age Publishing.
4. Kelly, Rhys and Ute Kelly (2019), Community engagement on climate adaptation: an evidence review. Environment Agency, England. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/827642/Community_engagement_on_climate_adaptation_report.pdf
5. Kelly, Ute and Rhys Kelly (2020) Readiness Assessment for Climate Change Adaptation: Tools and Guidance. Environment Agency, England.
6. Kelly, Rhys and Ute Kelly (2020) Hemsby Readiness Assessment Report.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)**Impact 1: New Definition of Engagement Challenges in National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (Policy/Capacity)**

As outlined in section 2 above, our Evidence Review has contributed to changes in approach in engaging communities in planning and decision-making for climate adaptation, particularly in relation to flooding and coastal change. The academic peer review of our report [I] noted that it is 'a well written and accessible review' that 'could be used easily to encourage reflection and prompt discussion and learning within the team designing engagement approaches for case study sites.' The policy relevance of this work has been recognised at national level. For example, EA testimonial [D] states that '[t]he 5 engagement challenges raised in the evidence review feature in the new Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England [A], which sets out how flood and coastal risk will be managed for the next 30 years'. This strategy document includes a page dedicated to our research. It includes a requirement that findings from the 'Working Together to Adapt to a Changing Climate' are disseminated to other risk management authorities by the end of 2021 [E].

Impact 2. Informed engagement design and practice in two communities (Understanding, Awareness and Attitudes/Enhanced Capacity)

In the two pilot locations taking part in the 'Working Together' project, the application of a readiness assessment process generated helpful insights into the specific challenges they face, and into the range of perceptions and perspectives from both local residents and FCERM professionals working in these areas. The detailed analysis this generated has been fed back to local project groups in Surrey and Norfolk and has led to new or different actions. In Norfolk, better knowledge about the levels and nature of readiness in the community has enabled more informed, detailed planning for engagement on longer-term adaptation challenges, taking account of climate change impacts alongside a range of local needs and conditions [H]. In Surrey, our analysis fed into a role-play simulation designed to enhance 'readiness'. This has impacted on Surrey Council's approach to local community engagement on the issue [F]. A Council Officer with a brief for Flood Risk and Network Resilience points out that 'our intention is that we will be able to use the scenario discussion that has been developed by this project in other communities in Surrey and hopefully by others across the country, building a wider awareness and understanding of surface water flood risk and the complicated issues that accompany it'. A Flood Resilience Engagement Officer in the EA's Kent, South London and East Surrey Flood Resilience Team comments that this approach also has relevance as an educational tool, e.g. in 'help[ing] ... secondary school and further education settings engage more actively with the topic of climate and change and the more specifically the challenges facing theirs, and other communities, in relation to changing flood risk' [G]. Our work has thus led to more context-sensitive and inclusive engagement strategies in both locations.

Impact 3: Incorporation of Risk, Resilience and Readiness Assessment into a major national funding scheme (Policy/Capacity)

Our successful piloting of readiness assessment in these two communities has led Senior EA staff to support the development of integrated climate adaptation risk, resilience and readiness assessment tools that can be used by FCERM professionals in a range of contexts. Our tools establish a new best-practice protocol for initial information-gathering and situation analysis that will help to pre-empt and/or tackle some common obstacles to effective engagement, planning and decision-making in this emerging area of policy and practice. Our work substantially contributed to the decision by the EA and DEFRA in summer 2020 to adapt and test a risk, resilience and readiness assessment protocol in the first phase of a new GBP150,000,000 government-funded scheme to promote 'innovative resilience' strategies in flood and coastal risk management across 25 areas in England, 2020-2027 [B, C, D]. As A Senior Scientist within the EA observes, '[t]his is a big success for embedding learning from the project'.

We have been commissioned to develop and oversee the implementation of a detailed methodology for a systematic Risk, Resilience and Readiness Assessment, to be carried out by Lead Flood Authorities and local partnerships. Our contribution includes the development of training and detailed guidance for the professionals involved, with a particular focus on the process of Risk, Resilience and Readiness Assessment and analysis of the data generated. This public policy initiative further demonstrates the impact of our work in developing UK national and local agencies' approach to partnership development and community engagement.

Impact 4. Learning and practical tools for a national Community of Practice (Understanding/Capacity)

Throughout the 'Working together' project, we have communicated work in progress to a wider Community of Practice that includes 300+ FCERM and engagement professionals from the Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales, Risk Management Authorities and independent consultancies. A Senior Scientist the Environment Agency comments that '[t]he innovative approaches and learning from the project will be taken forward by the Environment Agency's National Engagement Team, much of which will become business as usual. This will lead to changes in both strategy and operational practice, including the support and guidance provided to other Risk Management Authorities.' [C].

Our webinar on Readiness Assessment in June 2020 generated significant interest among this Community of Practice, and follow-up included leading to two dedicated sessions on Readiness Assessment as part of the EA's 2020 Working With Others Learning Fortnight in November and an additional webinar for the EA's Carbon Expo in December 2020. Feedback from participants and organisers confirms that our approach and assessment tools have been well received within this community of practice. As one participant observed, '[t]he tool will enable us improve everybody's understanding of the context of our work together, thereby making collaborative engagement more effective.'

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[A] National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England (specific mention of this research on pages 98/99.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/920944/023_15482_Environment_agency_digitalAW_Strategy.pdf

[B] Testimonial from Senior Engagement Advisor, Flood and Coastal Risk Management Engagement Team, Environment Agency.

[C] Testimonial from Senior Scientist, Flood & Coastal Risk Management Research, Environment Agency.

[D] Testimonial from Principal Scientist, Flood & Coastal Risk Management Research, Environment Agency.

[E] Testimonial from Director of Flood Risk Strategy & National Adaptation at the Environment Agency.

[F] Testimonial from Flood Risk and Network Resilience, Surrey County Council and member of Caterham action research group.

[G] Testimonial from Flood Resilience Engagement Advisor, Kent, South London and East Surrey Flood Resilience Team, Environment Agency, and member of Caterham action research group.

[H] Testimonial from Coastal Partnership East team, Norfolk.

[I] Academic and Practitioner Peer Review on the Evidence Review