Participatory Project Management for Disaster Resilience

Crawford, Lynn

Published: 01/09/2012

Document Version: Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Licence: CC BY-NC-ND

Link to publication in Bond University research repository.

Traditional project management is based on a linear and rational approach in which clear goals and boundaries, tangible end products, low permeability, and a focus on monitoring and control. Disaster-related projects are more likely to have ambiguously defined and evolving goals, emergent strategy and high permeability. Stakeholder involvement and flexibility are likely to be more highly valued than control.

As a form of public project management, the challenges of disaster related projects will be compounded by the uncertainty, ambiguity and stakeholder management issues characteristic of project management in the public sector (Crawford et al., 2003).

New approaches to project management for disaster related projects

In the context of disaster-related projects, application of systems thinking approaches (Checkland, 1981) have been proposed (Steinfort, 2010). Another approach with potential for disaster resilience is Agile project management (Cockburn, 2006), based on a process view of human collaboration whereby a series of relatively small tasks are defined and implemented incrementally as the situation demands, in a flexible and adaptive manner, rather than as part of a fully pre-planned process. This approach has potential to provide a framework for participation and action, progressively engaging the community in response and recovery as the situation evolves, an approach which is highly recommended in dealing with disastrous events.

The aims of this first phase of the research are to: (1) develop understanding of the existing regulatory framework for disaster recovery in Queensland and its relationship to and treatment of project management, and (2) establish a workable case study approach in terms of access and data availability. These aims have been addressed through the use of discourse analysis which also provides theoretical underpinning.

Key references