Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

ASCENT (Advancing Skill Creation to ENhance Transformation)

A new project funded by the European Union aims to strengthen research and innovation capacity for the development of societal resilience to disasters. The project, called ASCENT (Advancing Skill Creation to ENhance Transformation), will support training, skills, leadership development, international collaboration and university-industry partnerships. It will strengthen the ability of higher education to respond to research needs in disaster resilience. It will also empower individuals and organisations with the skills, competencies and credentials needed to continue to pursue research, and to lead research at institutions, aimed at reducing the impact of disasters.

ASCENT is co-funded by an EU Erasmus+ programme grant, will run for three years and is led by the University of Huddersfield's Global Disaster Resilience Centre, based in the UK. They are joined by a consortium of 13 European and Asian higher education institutions from the Bangladesh, Estonia, Lithuania, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand and the UK.

Over three years, the ASCENT consortium will identify research and innovative capacity needs across Asian higher education institutions in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Thailand to tackle the development of societal resilience to disasters. It will develop research infrastructure, prepare researchers to undertake advanced, world-class and innovative, multi- and inter-disciplinary research, and increase international cooperation among higher education. It will also explore, promote and initiate opportunities for fruitful university / industry partnerships. In doing so, ASCENT will provide the link between the research and the public, helping to reinforce the connection between education and society.

The project was inspired by the Sendai Framework for Action 2015-2030, signed by 187 UN member states in March 2015, as a 15-year, voluntary, non-binding agreement which recognises that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk but that responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders including local government, the private sector and other stakeholders. The Framework identifies that international, regional, sub-regional and transboundary cooperation remains pivotal in supporting the efforts of States, their national and local authorities, as well as communities and businesses, to reduce disaster risk.

The first phase of ASCENT will involve a detailed analysis of existing capacity for disaster resilience among higher education in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Thailand. This will provide the basis for future capacity development activities.

For further information on the ASCENT project, contact Professor Dilanthi Amaratunga (d.amaratunga@hud.ac.uk) and Professor Richard Haigh (r.haigh@hud.ac.uk) or visit the website at www.disaster-resilience.net/ascent.

ASCENT project consortium

Programme Countries (Europe)
University of Huddersfield, United Kingdom (Lead Partner)
University of Central Lancashire, United Kingdom
Lund University, Sweden
Mid-Sweden University, Sweden
Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania
Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia

Partner Countries (Asia)
University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka
University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka
University of Naresuan, Thailand
Chiang Mai University, Thailand
University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
BRAC University, Bangladesh
Patuakhali Science and Technology University, Bangladesh

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