

The Whole Community Approach: Emergency Preparedness and Response

Panelist on February 27, 2019

Beth Boyd	American Red Cross Regional Disaster Officer; President of the Arizona Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)
Sheri Gibbons	Director of Emergency Preparedness for Arizona State University, former Emergency Management Coordinator for the Town of Gilbert
Robert Rowley	Director for the Maricopa County Department of Emergency Management
Dan Neely	Manager of Community Resilience and Regional Recovery Manager at the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (Guest Presenter)
Brian Gerber	Co-Director of the ASU Center for Emergency Management and Homeland Security (Moderator)

Executive Summary

As the first of three panel discussions examining how communities address all phases of emergency management—preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation—this panel centered on best practices for local governments to engage community groups and stakeholders in developing a culture of preparedness and response. Building off the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) *‘Whole Community Approach’*, panelists discussed current challenges and opportunities in engaging local communities in emergency management practice. Dan Neely, from the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (New Zealand), presented their novel and game-changing approach in cultivating community participation in emergency preparedness and response. Using *Community Emergency Hubs*, the Wellington region prepares their communities for disasters by fostering a culture of community-driven response, absent official emergency responders. Additionally, they prepare their official response, so they are able to work with the emerging community response. As Dan notes, this approach has the co-benefit of increasing community resilience.

**Whole Community Approach
FEMA (2011)**

Strategic Themes:

1. Understand community complexity
2. Recognize community capabilities & needs
3. Foster relationships with community leaders
4. Build & maintain partnerships
5. Empower local action
6. Leverage & strengthen social infrastructure, networks, and assets

Challenges in Engaging ‘The Whole Community’

- Community apathy to hazards and disaster risk
- Limited number of emergency management staff
- Considerable time & resources spent planning and exercising emergency plans
- Limited authority to mandate new initiatives
- Hegemony of the ‘top-down’, government-centric approach... the traditional approach
- Fewer volunteers dedicated to working in organizations active in disasters and more events are recurring nationwide

The Wellington, New Zealand Approach...
Presented by Dan Neely

- Follows prior disaster experiences; notably the 2011 Christchurch earthquake
- Recognizes the limits of a government-centric approach to preparedness & response activities
- Prioritizes community engagement



Download Dan Neely's presentation [here](#).



...Community Emergency Hubs

- Starts where disasters occur—local neighborhoods
 - Connects emergency management with day-to-day neighborhood organizations ([GetPrepared.NZ](#))
- Uses residents' self-organization, with limited training, to [guide](#) disaster response
 - Rallies residents around a local *community hub* and around every-day activities, introducing emergency preparedness to identify and protect what people love
 - Fosters self-support, neighborhood pride, and community resilience

Up Next

To continue this conversation on the role of emergency management in achieving vibrant and sustainable communities, join us for our next panel discussion where we examine 'The Whole Community Approach' in **hazard mitigation** and **disaster recovery**.

**The Whole Community Approach:
Hazard Mitigation & Disaster Recovery**

Next Panel...

Monday, March 18th, 2019
12:00 – 1:00PM
Arizona State University
Wrigley Hall, Room 418