



Editorial Introduction: 10 Years After and 5 Years to Go for the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

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1 Happy Birthday to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction!

Happy 10th birthday to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (SFDRR)! On 18 March 2015, it was signed, contributing to the wider Agenda 2030 that embraces sustainable development, climate change, humanitarianism, development finance, and many others. It focuses on reducing the risk of disasters within the wider aims to do better for ourselves.

Following the signing, this journal published a special issue on “Analyzing the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction” (vol. 6, no. 2), which I edited with Mickey Glantz. Then, in 2020, just in time for the global catastrophe of the COVID-19 pandemic, I edited a special issue of this journal on “Five Years of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction” (vol. 11, no. 2). Here we are after another half-decade, with me editing vol. 16, no. 1 as a special issue on “The Sendai Framework Celebrates Its 10th Birthday.”

The SFDRR now enters its potentially troubled, rebellious teen years, perhaps requiring carefully balanced discipline and nurturing to guide it through the difficulties. Perhaps it will maturely accept the various coming-of-age rituals enacted by many cultures around the world during these next years. Perhaps it will accelerate all our endeavors to avoid disasters, birthing more caring, compassion, and action to alleviate suffering and to support everyone’s lives and livelihoods. Perhaps all this is too optimistic.

We do have the advantage of knowing that the SFDRR will never reach the age of adulthood by human standards.

It ends in 2030 at the age of 15 with plans now, enfolded within Agenda Beyond 2030, for examining what will happen afterwards.

To support this process, we ought to understand what worked and is working, what did not work and is not working, how we should pivot for the remaining 5 years, and what it means and does beyond 5 years. This special issue inputs into these exchanges and discussions, reflecting on where the SFDRR has come from, how it applies and does not apply, and where it might be going for its final third. It offers elements of celebration, as per this special issue’s title, alongside areas of commiseration. Recognizing that no process could ever be perfect, or will even be agreed on as being perfect, for 18 March 2025, the articles and commentaries here critique the SFDRR in order to suggest positives and negatives, with constructive approaches for improvement without losing the gains.

2 Articles and Commentaries

This issue begins with three diverse commentaries, with the authors using the depth and breadth of their experience to deliberate on the articles. Through the power of running a United Nations organization (Celeste Saulo), having run a United Nations organization (Mami Mizutori), and leading a professional and trade journal (Luavut Zahid), we learn how disasters and disaster risk pervade everyday lives, as well as what the SFDRR provides and could not provide to redress collective concerns.

To try to overcome entrenched divisions, I asked the head of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for a commentary. They declined, which is exactly what happened with the SFDRR+5 special issue under a different UNFCCC leader. We have much more work to do in order to better intermingle work on disaster risk and human-caused climate change.

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The peer-reviewed articles here then emerge in three clusters. First, the importance of connecting topics, rather than partitioning into silos. Exploring the SFDRR, Peters examines peace and peacebuilding, Mena covers humanitarianism, and Palmeiro-Silva et al. cover climate change and health. Each article evidences the relevance of the SFDRR to their topic—and vice versa. We have so much to learn and apply from across fields.

The second cluster is place-based: What does the SFDRR mean for locations? Waked and Jaime start locally with Tunja, Colombia where they grew up followed by Benouar and Benmokhtar for their country of Algeria. Next, Cabral et al. from Latin America and the Caribbean take a regional approach for Latin America and the Caribbean. This cluster concludes with Grydehøj et al. intersecting disaster studies and island studies to determine how the SFDRR does and does not create useful links between these two ephemeral fields.

Disasters, disaster risk, and disaster risk reduction influence not only where we live, but also how we live. The final cluster of articles explores sectors or themes across geographies. A bridging article between the second and third clusters comes from Sharan and Gaillard, detailing gender while focusing on two locales within South Asia. Then, Rokhideh et al. and Hamill-Stewart adopt a global approach, respectively for warnings and satellite systems.

An immediate question is whether or not this trio actually depicts “sectors” or “themes”—it might even be pejorative to label them as such. Why are the first three articles “connectors” and these three are not—as well as why the first three articles are not necessarily sectors or themes? English, perhaps, lacks adequate descriptors for these two clusters and their differences; that is, topics or categories that are focused while being everyday/everywhere, representing specialties that affect everyone without pause.

The three clusters and this entire special issue are anchored by the article from Davis and Reid, suggesting a theoretical foundation of relationality and resilience with respect to the SFDRR. It melds academic concepts and the realities of a policy framework.

Collectively, the authors represent the world of the SFDRR. They range across career stages, straddle academic and non-academic spaces, are balanced by gender and discipline, have multiple first languages, and are from every inhabited continent, personally and institutionally. They form a supergroup with remarkable insights, breadth, and depth for this special issue’s scope.

The blatant limitation is the number of authors affiliated with my main employer, University College London, which is inappropriate for avoiding both conflicts-of-interest and the appearance of conflicts-of-interest. I very much apologize for this situation and this special issue began far distant from its originally envisioned form. Sadly, several

authors were forced to drop out near the submission deadline for fully understandable and legitimate reasons. The world’s direction is not treating many of us well, even with the privileges academics have, whether from the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and responses to it, debilitating institutional constraints, or life-changing personal circumstances.

Due to the importance of this special issue’s topic and the immovable deadline of 18 March 2025, I decided to pressure people to submit manuscripts. Those easiest to cajole to deprioritize other tasks for producing a paper swiftly are those nearest me professionally, mainly at my principal institution. What I did not tell them—and they are just finding out by reading this Editorial Introduction—was that I intended to select particularly harsh reviewers for their papers (and I did so). As some of the authors do know, my pre-review decision on some of their manuscripts was reject-and-resubmit. I was inspired at how they took on board my suggestions, resubmitted a thorough revision promptly, and passed a rather mean anonymous peer-review process—with deepest appreciation to all the reviewers—with me sometimes then demanding further rounds of revision.

Readers will therefore see the conflict-of-interest in terms of significant institutional overlap. They will also see the spectacular result of much-needed and profound articles from all the authors, furnishing originality, fascinating analysis, and creativity—exactly as science ought to be. Finally, readers will learn how evil I might be to ensure scientific rigor and quality after pushing for a rapid submission of an entirely new manuscript that would match this special issue’s mandate. I can affirm that all authors here are still talking to me, at least for now.

3 Continuing the Work

The articles and commentaries for this SFDRR+10 special issue lay out the daunting tasks ahead of us for disaster risk reduction, toward 2030 and far beyond. They also demonstrate how much has been achieved, since 2015 and long before. It is up to all of us to support those who are trying their best within awful circumstances while calling out those who are not. In seeking a safer world, we might disagree with particular aspects including many statements within this special issue. We can nonetheless move forward together.

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