

The **#NoNaturalDisasters** Conference

Realising the theory and practice behind the campaign

Thursday 22 September 2022 // 10:00 to 18:00

London, UK

(in-person & online)

Introduction

The #NoNaturalDisasters Twitter and online campaign launched in 2017 and has since been working to move the discussion around the unnaturalness of disasters away from a limited audience within the field of disaster risk reduction and management, to a broader audience. Through the use of Twitter and other online platforms, the campaign has allowed for a complimentary discussion and engagement that has built on the decades of work carried out by academics and practitioners on the topic and has allowed for a more democratised positioning.

The campaign has always had the aim of politely engaging and questioning the use of “natural” to describe disasters by those in positions of power (politicians, government officials, journalists, businesses etc). Through individual tweets or posts highlighting the misleading use of “natural” to describe disasters, to specific guidance documents aimed at various sectors on how to change discourse and terminology, the campaign successes have been numerous.

To mark the 5th Anniversary of the campaign, the conference will provide space for discussions about the aims and the ways of achieving them as we move forward.

Objective

Held over the course of a full day, we'll use expert-led discussions, presentations, and interactive sessions to explore how the message of #NoNaturalDisasters and the successes experienced so far can be built on and turned into tangible, effective, real-world action at every phase of the disaster cycle/ process.

Through the overarching themes of the conference, we'll explore a number of opportunities, challenges and plans to take the theory of the #NoNaturalDisasters campaign and make practical, lasting and real-world changes to the disaster risk reduction and management cycle.

Themes

The event has been developed to answer questions under three main themes;

- **Implications of supporting the status quo**

There remains a not-insignificant section of the disaster community who continue to advocate for the use of 'natural' to describe disasters within their work. Placing the liability for disasters at nature's door has often been a useful tool for institutions, organisations and individuals to avoid considering their own role in risk and vulnerability creation. This theme will aim to discuss and unpack some of the ways in which classing a disaster as natural has been beneficial throughout history.

- **Researching the unnaturalness of disasters**

The discussion around the unnaturalness of disasters has been developed over decades, with many notable academics and practitioners providing research and thought on the topic. This theme will explore what exists already and where there are gaps that need further consideration. The theme itself will be framed under the principles of the [Radix disaster studies manifesto and accord](#) which argue for a new approach to disaster research and analysis.

- **Our work within the broader social & economic systems**

Recognising the impact of our current economic, political and social systems on the creation of risk and vulnerability forms a vital aspect of the #NoNaturalDisasters campaign. This conference theme will explore how we as advocates work within our current systems to better our preparedness and response to disasters.

Content

Using engaging, interactive, and lively sessions, the discussion during the day's activities have been designed to be informative and lead to usable outcomes for attendees.

Target audience

Anyone working in a sector related to disaster risk reduction or education on the disaster process (academia, research organisations, insurance, governments etc). The event has been developed to be as inclusive as possible; we particularly encourage those who are new to the campaign to join the discussion.

General admin

The event will be held in Central London and will have in-person and online attendance available.

It is envisaged that some tickets will be sold with a small voluntary donation suggested at registration to help cover the administrative costs¹.

¹ Being unable to pay a donation will not impact an individual's registration process or attendance to the conference.