

## Reconstruction After Tornadoes: As if Children Mattered

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### Abstract

**Statement of the Problem:** Although children are among the most negatively impacted when disasters strike, they are always left out from, or considered as an afterthought in, the planning process for rebuilding communities after disasters. In order to assist children to cope with disasters of all types, it is essential to identify their needs. It is also vital to work with them and other relevant stakeholders (such as their families, communities, governments at all levels and humanitarian agencies) to incorporate those needs into the formulation and implementation of disaster risk reduction and management plans and policies. **Methodology and Theoretical Orientation:** We used a Community-based Participatory Action Research approach to identify the needs of children after the April 2011 tornadoes that hit the central and northern parts of the State of Alabama in the United States. **Findings, Conclusion and Significance:** This presentation analyzes how the University of Massachusetts Boston's Center for Rebuilding Sustainable Communities after Disasters (CRSCAD) and the University of Alabama's Department of Educational Studies in Psychology, Research Methodology and Counseling, worked jointly to mobilize stakeholders in the affected communities to develop a Community's Charter - a Child-Centered Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction by the community. The use of this community-based approach to assess the impact of the tornado on the local communities and their needs for rebuilding provides a methodological framework for future post-tornado local development.

**Recommendations:** The participants developed three sets of recommendations for children and their families, schools, and the community.

**Recent Publications :**

1. Awotona, Adenrele (Ed.). *Planning for Community-based Disaster Resilience Worldwide: Learning from Case Studies in Six Continents*, Routledge, 2017, xvii+470pp.
2. Awotona, Adenrele (Ed.) *Rebuilding Sustainable Communities after Disasters in China, Japan and Beyond*.

Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, xlv+423pp.,

3. Awotona, Adenrele (Ed.). *Rebuilding Sustainable Communities with Vulnerable Populations after the Cameras Have Gone: A Worldwide Study*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012, 570pp.

4. Awotona, Adenrele (Ed.). *Rebuilding Sustainable Communities for Children and their Families after Disasters: A Global Survey*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010, xxviii+458pp.

5. Awotona, Adenrele (Ed.). *Rebuilding Sustainable Communities in Iraq: Policies, Programs and International Perspectives*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008, xxiii+317pp.

### Biography

Adenrele Awotona, Professor of Urban Planning and Community Studies, is the founder and Director of the Center for Rebuilding Sustainable Communities after Disasters, and a former Dean of the College of Public and Community Service at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA. He was previously a Director of Studies for the British Council International Seminars ("Reconstruction after disasters") in the UK where he has also served at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne as a Director of Graduate Studies in architecture and urban design. Through research, consultancy and teaching, he has professional experience in several countries in five continents. Similarly, he has been a principal investigator on major research projects funded by various agencies in the USA and UK. A stream of publications has, therefore, emanated from his research and consultancy services. Professor Awotona earned his Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge, UK, and a Certificate from Harvard University's Institute of Management and Leadership in Education

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