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IMPACTS ON CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT

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comment

An author recently told me that a journalist of their acquaintance had questioned – rather superciliously – why the *CRJ* does not engage



in political reporting. I can assure the journalist that this is entirely intentional and will always be one of the main principles of this publication.

Why? Democracy is fragile and must be nurtured; it is essential to any well-functioning country. Yet many political systems have evolved in ways that preclude meaningful long-term planning, particularly in the areas of national and societal resilience, disaster mitigation and prevention. As Eric McNulty says on p12: "Politicians think in electoral cycles. The action needed to address emerging risks is more urgent and requires consideration of longer time horizons."

In many countries, the roles of ministers or mayors are frequently shuffled; sometimes they don't get to spend enough time on an issue to gain a true understanding of the complexities. And any policies – however bold, enlightened or effective – are at risk of reversal or of being dropped by incoming governments or new incumbents. Sadly, this can often be because the spending increases required are 'politically' unpalatable.

This the opposite of what is needed, especially when it comes to the complex and multidisciplinary breadth of what the *CRJ* covers. These critical areas are far too important to be swayed by partisan, often diametrically opposed ideological agendas. Preserving lives, the environment and economies should not be subject to petty politics, unquestioning tribalism or point scoring.

I was astounded at the naïveté of the comment. It is clearly wrong to think that 'politics' alone holds the solutions as the "risk picture darkens," (Bruce Mann, p8). At best, this view is misguided. At worst, it is profoundly ignorant of what is required to grasp the intricacies of – and interconnections within – this field.

Which is why *CRJ* is so proud of its independence, neutrality and lack of political commentary. Our reports and insights provide reasoned, nuanced analysis written by – and for – the people who are dedicated to improving the safety of individuals, communities, businesses and the governments they work for. Let's listen to the experts.

Stealing our concentration: p16



Gracie Broom

Emerging issues: p22



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Ukraine: p64



Rosie Hunter | Ikon Images

Nigeria focus: p92



Reuters | Akinunde Akinleye

Students at the forefront of resilience

Awareness of emergency planning has never been higher, says the Emergency Planning Society (EPS) in this analysis of how significant the UK's resilience profession is becoming

The role of the resilience profession in helping communities and the country to respond and recover from Covid-19, along with the part it has played in this winter's storms, the terror attack in Liverpool (UK) and many more incidents, have all helped to raise the profession's profile in the United Kingdom.

Resilience is now also at the forefront of the UK Government's thinking, with the long-awaited final and full version of its Resilience Strategy due any moment, while a 'mainstream' book about disaster management, penned by resilience professional and *CRJ* Advisory Panel Member Professor Lucy Easthope, is a Top 10 bestseller.

Like any profession, resilience needs to encourage young blood to join its ranks and there has never been a better time to do so. As well as a more general awareness of the profession, the work has never been so varied or widespread; from CBRN to cybersecurity, flood defences to community resilience, pandemic response, counterterrorism, communication and human aspects... the list goes on.

How should the profession encourage and enable students to be the best resilience professionals possible? How do we ensure they have the support, the skills and the ongoing enthusiasm needed to thrive in a challenging work environment? How do we make sure that they are aware of the true depth and breadth of the profession and the opportunities it offers across so many sectors and specialisms?

Jeannie Barr, Acting Chair of the EPS, says: "One way is to make sure students have ready and available access to

those of us who are already working in the sector, so they can supplement their academic learning of the theory of emergency planning with the practical realities of delivery.

"The EPS has launched a new student network for its student membership that aims to do just that. The society has long recognised that peer support is key to success in resilience and actively encourages students at every level to join – membership for full-time students is just £10 a year. For that, they have access to everything a full member of the society has, and this new network will offer even more.

"This network supports our student membership and provides opportunities for networking, learning and mentoring – vital not just in recruiting quality people into our profession, but retaining them too."

Professional benefits

Muhammad A Esat will be leading this new initiative. Esat is undertaking a BSc in Disaster Management and Emergency Planning at Coventry University and is now working on placement within the UK's National Health Service. He believes that being part of a wider professional society has huge professional benefits, particularly after students have been learning so much in isolation as a result of Covid-19.

He says: "This is a great profession and it offers so many different opportunities for students. It truly is a chance to play a part in saving people's lives – not everyone can, or wants, to be a firefighter for example, but in our profession we do want to improve and save people's lives.

"While studying Disaster Management and Emergency Management, the EPS was instrumental in my academic and professional development. Through joining the society, I was able to hear first-hand from those involved across the spectrum of emergency management, both from the public and private sector, including Category 1 and 2 responders, those in the charitable and voluntary sectors, as well as academia.

"This has not only informed my education, giving me the chance to listen to themed discussions, but also opportunities such as being able to contribute to government consultations and calls for evidence.

"Most importantly for myself, being part of it has helped me advance my career, giving me the knowledge and insights needed to help me secure my current role in the Emergency Preparedness Resilience and Response National Team."

The EPS National Student Network is open to all those who are currently enrolled in academia, either at undergraduate or post-graduate level and who are subscribed members of the EPS.

■ *The EPS is a CRJ Key Network Partner. Visit the-eps.org for more information*

Networking, learning and mentoring are vital in recruiting and retaining quality people into the emergency management profession

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