



**Gravitazz  
Institute**

For disaster reduction and emergency management

**QUARTERLY PUBLICATION SERIES**  
*“AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES ON DISASTER RISK  
REDUCTION”*

**Call for Papers**

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## A. INTRODUCTION

The world is currently experiencing an alarming increase in the occurrence and magnitude of disasters. This has been attributed largely to global climate change. Since 1980, eight of the world's ten deadliest natural disasters have occurred post-2000, the most devastating being the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, with 222,570 fatalities. In 2015, a total of 1,565 earthquakes with a magnitude of 5 and above were recorded worldwide. According to the 2013 World Disasters Report, floods accounted for 44 % of deaths caused by natural hazards – more than any other natural disaster, including storms, which accounted for 41 % of total casualties. There is therefore a clear concern worldwide among decision-makers, experts, businesses and communities regarding the rising number of disasters and their severe impact on livelihoods.

Continentially, Africa has experienced its fair share of disasters, just like other continents. Although the scale of disasters in Africa is generally smaller than in other continents such as Asia, their effects on affected populations have been devastating. This is largely due to the high levels of vulnerability of populations in African countries. Out of 100 disasters reported worldwide, only 20 occur in Africa, yet the continent suffers 60% of all disaster-related deaths. The World Risk Index<sup>1</sup> clearly illustrates this casual relation and shows that out of the 15 countries with the highest level of vulnerability to disasters, 13 are situated on the African continent. Indeed, countries like Liberia (ranked 56<sup>th</sup>), Zambia (ranked 66<sup>th</sup>) and the Central African Republic (ranked 71<sup>st</sup>) have high levels of vulnerability as opposed to high levels of exposure to hazards. The latter are mainly epidemics, endemic diseases, drought, floods, agricultural pests and bush fires, even though some areas are also susceptible to earthquakes, cyclones and volcanic eruptions. Natural hazards interact with human-induced hazards such as armed conflicts, air, road and railway incidents as well as industrial hazards such as mining accidents and chemical spills. Other contributing factors include rapid urban population growth, forced migration, environmental degradation, precarious urbanisation, food insecurity, poverty, fragile economies, infrastructure and institutions and cultural and political instability.

Diseases and conflicts also have a devastating impact on livelihoods and assets. For instance, throughout Africa, there are 500,000 measles-associated deaths each year and the direct and indirect costs of malaria are estimated at US\$ 1.7 billion per year. Since 1980, conflicts have caused at least 3.7 million excess deaths and cost the region about US\$ 13 billion annually; equally destructive wars have destroyed 70 % of the health networks of some countries and have left behind 30-40 million landmines, making Africa the most mine-infested continent in the world<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The WorldRiskIndex is calculated by the University of Stuttgart ranking 171 countries by multiplying vulnerability with exposure to natural hazards (cyclones, droughts, earthquakes, floods, and sea-level rise) and is an integral part of the WorldRiskReport published by UNU-EHS and Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9170231>

In 2016, the continent was hit by the worst drought in over 30 years as a result of the El Nino phenomenon<sup>3</sup>, affecting over 40 million people in the Southern African region alone. This crisis prompted the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to launch a USD 2.4 billion appeal to assist populations in need of urgent food assistance.

It is especially at the national and local level in Africa that capacities need to be strengthened urgently. Although the continent's science, technology and academic capabilities in the disaster risk domain may not be as advanced as elsewhere in the world, in recent years, its capacity to produce high quality disaster risk research has gained considerable momentum. The International Council of Science (ICSU) as well as bi- and multilateral efforts, including those of USAID, the World Bank and the EU, have particularly encouraged this in combination with efforts of national governments, local authorities and the African scientific community<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, the recently adopted Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (SFDRR)<sup>5</sup> is people-focused and action-oriented in its approach to Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and applies to the risk of small-scale and large-scale disasters caused by human-induced or natural hazards as well as related environmental, technological and biological hazards and risks. International agreements can therefore play a substantial role in catalysing DRR activities in disaster-prone countries and leverage on this momentum.

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<sup>3</sup> El Nino is a warming of the central to eastern tropical Pacific that occurs, on average, every two to seven years. During an El Nino event, sea surface temperatures across the Pacific can warm by 1-3 degrees F or more for anything between a few months to a year or two. El Nino impacts weather systems around the globe so that some places receive more rain while others receive none at all, more extremes becoming the norm (UNOCHA, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> 6th Session of the Africa Regional Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, 22-25 November 2016, Mauritius, Pre-Event „Science & Technology and Academic Community Preparatory Consultation“.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unisdr.org/we/coordinate/sendai-framework>

## B. RATIONALE, OBJECTIVES AND TIMELINE OF THE PUBLICATION

Understanding Disaster Risk is the first priority for action of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (SFDRR). Drawing on the current lack of DRR-related journals in Africa, the Gravitazz quarterly publication series will therefore seek to publish a wide array of views, experiences and best practices from across the continent and beyond, in order to:

- Contribute to building solid DRR knowledge in the continent;
- Provide a renowned, specialised and peer-reviewed publication platform for practitioners and experts to publish on issues related to DRR and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA);
- Promote evidence-based and applied research, knowledge exchange and best practices.

The *Gravitazz Publication Series* entitled *African Perspectives on Disaster Risk Reduction* will present a selection of articles drawing from the institute's extensive network of experts on the African continent with the purpose of providing compelling research-based knowledge on DRR in order to inform the scientific community, media, policy- and decision-makers as well as the broader public on pressing topics and future research areas in this particular field. The series will be published on a quarterly basis resulting in four editions per year. The institute thereby aims to showcase an array of findings and good practices from the African sub-regions, thus ensuring a balanced representation of sources.

The publication will seek to target the following audiences in the African continent and at a global level with an emphasis on the *African Diaspora*:

- The Science, Technology and Academic Community (STAC), including researchers, Master students, PhD candidates and academics;
- DRR/DRM experts and practitioners;
- Policy- and decision-makers;
- Journalists and the media; and
- The broader public.

The table below outlines the publishing process with Gravitazz and the respective deadlines.

**Table 1: Call for Abstracts/Papers**

<b>Publishing with Gravitazz Step-by-Step</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<b>Submission of abstracts (max. 200 words)</b>	24 May – 30 June 2017
<b>Final submission of abstracts</b>	30 June 2017
<b>Final notice of approval of abstracts</b>	7 July 2017
<b>Submission of papers</b>	7 July – 31 July 2017
<b>Deadline for submission of papers</b>	31 July 2017
<b>Completion of review and revision process</b>	31 July – 25 August 2017
<b>Tentative date for publication of first issue</b>	August 2017

## C. PROCESS OF SUBMISSION OF ABSTRACTS/PAPERS

*We invite interested practitioners and scholars across the African continent and beyond to submit suggestions for abstracts/papers on relevant topics that showcase an **African Perspective on Disaster Risk Reduction**.*

The Gravitazz Publication Series *African Perspectives on Disaster Risk Reduction* thus seeks contributions from practitioners and scholars in African countries and beyond to critically analyse contemporary developments and trends in the area of Disaster Risk Reduction towards building resilience and sustainable development in the different regions of Africa.

## D. AUTHOR GUIDELINES

Gravitazz invites **submissions of abstracts of no more than 200 words**. The deadline for submission of abstracts is 30 June 2017. The deadline for submission of the **full paper of between 3000 and 3500 words** (single-spaced, font: Arial 12) is 31 July 2017. The selection of papers will be based on the abstracts submitted. Authors will be notified whether they have been successful by 7 July 2017. The full papers must be an **original submission** not published elsewhere. Authors should use **in-text referencing** and include a **full list of references** at the end of the article. The preferred referencing style is the Harvard Style, with examples as follows:

1. Quijano, A. 2000. 'Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America', *Neplanta: Views from the South*, 1 (3): 533-80. In text: (Quijano, 2000:533-80).
2. Mignolo, W. 1995. *The Darker Side of Modernity: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. In text: (Mignolo, 1995).
3. Nabudere, D. undated. 'Ubuntu Philosophy. Memory and Reconciliation'. Available at <http://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/4521/3621.pdf?...1> (accessed on 23 February 2015). In text: (Nabudere, undated).

For further details and guidelines pertaining to the Gravitazz quarterly publication series, please refer to the concept note under Annex 1.

## E. CONTACT DETAILS

Abstracts and full papers should be sent electronically in English as Word documents to the Editor-in-Chief, Ms. Jessica Johmann, at [Jessica@gravitazzcontinental.com](mailto:Jessica@gravitazzcontinental.com) and to the publication administration at [info@gravitazzcontinental.com](mailto:info@gravitazzcontinental.com).

Gravitazz looks forward to receiving your abstracts and full papers for the second edition of the Gravitazz quarterly research publication series *African Perspectives on Disaster Risk Reduction*.

Should you have any questions in the meantime, do not hesitate to contact the Editor-in-Chief at [Jessica@gravitazzcontinental.com](mailto:Jessica@gravitazzcontinental.com) and the publication administration at [info@gravitazzcontinental.com](mailto:info@gravitazzcontinental.com).

### OUR VISION

A disaster-prepared African continent

### MISSION STATEMENT

*"Our Mission is to be Africa's premier institute on practical Disaster Risk Management and capacity building grounded in evidence-based and policy-relevant research".*

### OUR VALUES

Expertise | Innovation | Adaptability | Collaboration | Diversity

### Contact Us

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**Disaster Management Connect Whatsapp Group:**

*Join us on Whatsapp (+27 60 738 6312) for expert discussions and knowledge exchange.*



## Annex 1: Concept Note of the Gravitazz Publication Series



### Concept Note

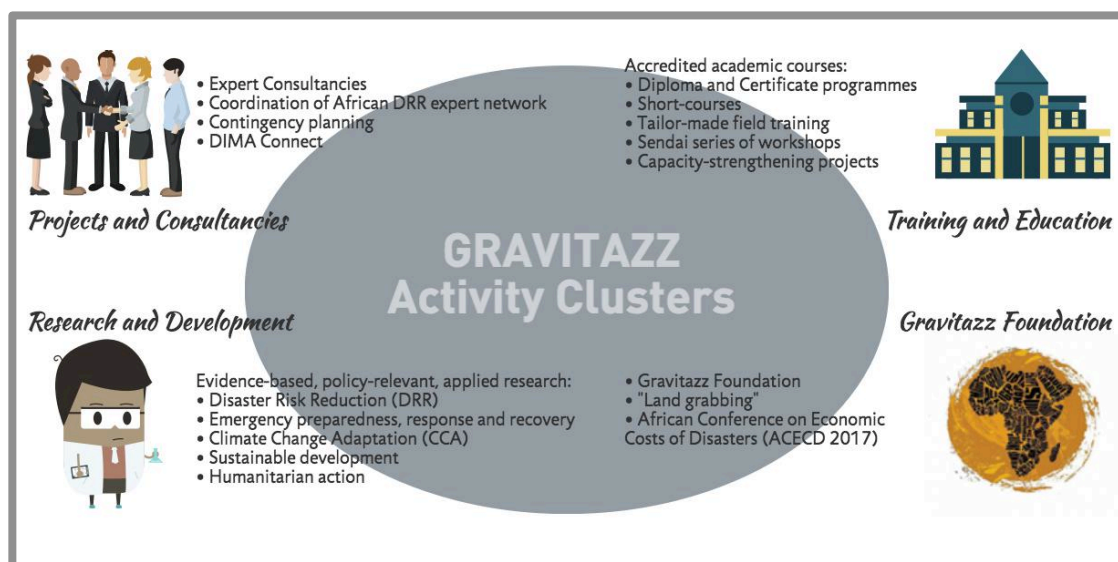
#### *Gravitazz Publication Series*

#### *“African Perspectives on Disaster Risk Reduction”*

*“Gravitazz aspires to be Africa’s premier institute on practical Disaster Risk Management and capacity building grounded in evidence-based and policy-relevant research”.*

# 1. Introduction

**Gravitazz Institute for Disaster Risk and Emergency Management** was founded in 2012 with its head office based in Johannesburg, South Africa. The institute devotes its work to integrating Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) into the development agenda through innovative approaches, evidence-based, policy-relevant and applied research as well as capacity strengthening activities and projects into the pressing continental problems of human survival and development, which stem from the impacts of natural and human-induced disasters and the risks associated with climate change. Gravitazz runs along four lines of activities: (1) Projects and Consultancies; (2) Research and Development; (3) Education and Training/Capacity Strengthening; and (4) the Gravitazz Foundation.



In addition, Gravitazz offers diploma/certificate programmes as well as short courses within the scope of its expertise to train practitioners, policy-makers and students in this crucial field. It further identified a gap in the need for capacity strengthening activities and programmes for Francophone Africa and therefore also carries out research, workshops, trainings and publications in French. Besides, Gravitazz is a member of the Disaster Management Institute for Southern Africa (DMISA)<sup>6</sup> and is the founder and coordinator of DIMA Connect: A Disaster Management Network for Africa, an online platform for information-sharing between disaster risk reduction practitioners and emergency workers from across the continent.

The institute operates across the African continent, covering a broad spectrum with regards to natural and human-induced disasters, Climate Change Adaptation (CCA), sustainable development, as well as complex emergencies around the world. Gravitazz was further created to provide crucial technical and practical support to various stakeholders – ranging from governments, private sector entities, UN

<sup>6</sup> Gravitazz is a member of DMISA since 2013. DMISA is the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)-recognised professional body for Disaster Management in South Africa and supports the Disaster Management profession in Southern Africa with opportunities for professional registration, recognition of prior learning for professional registration, and continuous professional development.

agencies and NPOs – in the field of DRR, CCA and resilience-building, amongst others, through its vast international network of expert-consultants. Although Gravitazz mainly operates on the African continent, it does not limit itself geographically and seeks to act wherever technical expertise is needed through its work and capacity-strengthening projects.

Gravitazz plays a critical role in spurring and promoting a significant mind-set shift with an emphasis on prevention and preparedness, which is an area where the majority of African countries are still lagging behind as governments predominantly concentrate on disaster response and recovery. Its core value therefore lies in its ability to integrate DRR and CCA into the sustainable development agenda through innovative approaches. It approaches Disaster Risk Management (DRM) as per the new Sendai Framework 2015-2030 (SFDRR) and orients its strategies of DRR towards the seven targets and four priorities for action.

## **2. Gravitazz Publication Series**

### ***African Perspectives on Disaster Risk Reduction***

**The *Gravitazz Publication Series* entitled “*African Perspectives on Disaster Risk Reduction*” presents a selection of papers drawing from the institute’s extensive network of experts on the African continent with the purpose of providing compelling research-based knowledge on DRR in order to inform the scientific community, media, policy and decision-makers as well as the broader public on pressing topics and future research areas. It will be published on a quarterly basis resulting in four editions per year. It will seek to showcase an array of findings and good practices from the African sub-regions, thus ensuring a balanced representation of sources.**

#### **2.1. Target audience:**

The publication will seek to target the following audiences in the African continent and internationally:

- The Science, Technology and Academic Community (STAC): including researchers, Master’s/PhD students and scholars;
- DRR/DRM experts and practitioners; and
- Policymakers, decision makers
- Journalists and the media; and
- The broader public.

#### **2.2. Writing style and content:**

The following will be expected from published authors:

- ◆ Submitting an abstract of no more than 200 words, identifying 2-3 key messages and developing a paper outline prior to writing;
- ◆ Ensuring the academic style of papers while considering the wider lay target audience trying to present the research with a logical and compelling narrative that can easily be followed;
- ◆ Keeping titles short, specific and engaging;
- ◆ Keeping sentences brief and concise;

- ◆ Information should be presented so that the reader can grasp the most crucial aspects and key findings at a glance e.g.:
  - Using numbered lists and bullets where appropriate;
  - Including boxes to highlight quotations, definitions and additional information to complement and inform the main text;
  - Using images, graphs, figures, etc. to visually convey and support ideas and theories;
  - Considering including clear and concrete policy recommendations where adequate;
- ◆ Word limit of 3000 to 3500 words max.

### **2.3. Structure:**

The publication shall be structured as follows:

- ◆ Cover page
- ◆ Editorial and Foreword (if applicable)
- ◆ Table of Content
- ◆ List of Acronyms
- ◆ Research Papers (6 per series) including short bio and portrait photo of authors
- ◆ Annexes
- ◆ References
- ◆ Description of Gravitazz (on back cover)

### **2.4. Visuals:**

Photos should have a human interest angle and allow the reader to establish a personal view and/or emotional connection to the photo. Researchers are encouraged to submit their own photos taken during field research if applicable.

Quality requirements of pictures (to be sent as separate files):

- ◆ Solution: 300 dpi
- ◆ JPG and TIFF formats possible
- ◆ Standard high resolution picture of 1000 upwards
- ◆ Copyright/source must be included

### **2.5. Cover:**

The picture on the cover page should relate directly to the topic of disaster risks and shall be different for every edition. The cover page should incorporate the colour coding (orange, beige, and red) of the Gravitazz logo and should be appealing to the audience in terms of layout.

### **2.6. Author's biography:**

The authors should submit a short biography (max. 200 words) and portrait photo to be included in the respective paper submission.

## **2.7. Author's responsibility:**

The primary responsibility for ensuring complete references rests with the author. The Author should agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved. In addition to being accountable for the parts of the work he or she has done, an author should be able to identify which co-authors are responsible for specific other parts of the work. In addition, authors should have confidence in the integrity of the contributions of their co-authors.

## **2.8. Publication process and timeline**

### **Production phases and time-frames per issue:**

Call for papers:	6 weeks (online)
Reviewing by Editorial Committee:	1-2 weeks
Layout and design:	3 – 5 days
Editing and Printing (if applicable):	2 weeks

The Communications unit will develop a specific timeline for this series, taking into consideration final deadlines for submission, other pressing matters and the external service providers availability (in case of print).

Calls for papers will be disseminated widely through Gravitazz platforms including through its website, social media pages and other platforms.

It is expected that respective issues will be published in April, July, November (Special Edition: ACECD 2017) and January.

## **2.9. Paper review procedure**

All papers are reviewed by the Chief Editor and members of the Editorial Board or qualified outside reviewers. Reviews will be made as rapidly as possible; Gravitazz strives to return reviewers' comments to authors promptly. It is the goal of Gravitazz to publish papers shortly after their final submission to feature in the respective publication series.