

GCRC Transdisciplinary Note

ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY:

“Collaboration and Co-learning for Multilayered Disaster Management”

January 20, 2026

On January 13, 2026, the Global Community Resilience Center (GCRC) hosted an international roundtable on multilayered disaster management, emphasizing transdisciplinary collaboration as a foundation for strengthening community and tourism resilience. Led by Dr. Mika Shimizu, Executive Director at GCRC and Dr. Giuseppe Aliperti, Professor at the University of Deusto in Bilbao (Spain), the session explored how integrating academic research with local, experiential, and value-based knowledge can bridge persistent gaps between disaster policy, practice, and lived realities.

Transdisciplinarity is a key concept underpinning this session. It emphasizes the integration of not only scientific and academic knowledge, but also local knowledge, field-based insights, and practical experience, to generate operational knowledge for disaster management and for building resilient and sustainable societies. However, such integration is neither easy nor automatic. It requires sustained co-learning and collaboration across disciplines, sectors, regions, and scales—both locally and internationally. This challenge is closely linked to the theme of multilayered disaster management discussed in this roundtable.

A key emerging finding was the critical role of community-based governance in disaster preparedness and response. Japanese examples such as Jishu Bosai Soshiki (neighborhood-based disaster prevention organizations) demonstrated how collective responsibility, self-organization, and early-phase preparedness are essential during fast-onset disasters like earthquakes and tsunamis. Complementary local strategies such as Tendenko, which prioritizes immediate self-evacuation based on pre-agreed community norms, and the local value system of Madei no Chikara, emphasizing careful, sincere, and respectful action toward people and nature, illustrated how culturally embedded practices can enhance survival, recovery, and long-term revitalization.

Comparative insights from the Basque Country highlighted Etorkizuna Eraikiz, an institutionalized collaborative local governance platform designed to promote cross-sector dialogue and shared responsibility for future development. Although

not originally disaster-focused, this model demonstrated strong potential for addressing slow-onset risks such as climate change and sea-level rise, particularly in tourism-dependent regions. The comparison between Japan's fast-onset disaster preparedness and Spain's slow-onset climate adaptation underscored the value of co-learning across different hazard types, governance cultures, and geographic contexts.

The roundtable also identified significant operational gaps in current disaster management frameworks, especially the limited integration of tourism risk communication and local knowledge into formal policy processes. Participants emphasized the need for practical transdisciplinary frameworks that translate community experiences into actionable strategies.

Overall, the discussion reflected a shared commitment to building resilient and sustainable societies through inclusive, multi-layered, and cross-sector collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and civil society. After receiving more than 20 registrations from around the world, a highly engaged group of selected participants representing Asia, Africa, Europe, North America, and Oceania actively contributed to the discussion. Through the exchange of academic expertise and local experiential knowledge, their participation was instrumental in the success of the initiative.

The Global Community Resilience Center (GCRC) (<https://gcrc.or.jp/>) a nonprofit organization, launched at Kyoto University, advances research, education and practice on resilience by integrating academic scholarship with societal knowledge, with a particular focus on disaster risk, community resilience, and sustainable society in complex and uncertain environments. Grounded in transdisciplinary principles, GCRC operates at the interface of academia, policy, and civil society. Through international dialogues, participatory research, and comparative learning, the Center fosters collaborative knowledge creation that supports evidence-informed policy-making and locally grounded action.