



CERL Security Summer School
5-7 September 2018
Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma
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**Dealing with disaster:
a network approach to collection security and salvage
in an (inter)national context and on a local level.**

When I first started working in the field of emergency preparedness with a focus on collection security I had yet to learn to look at the bigger picture. I thought it was obvious that the safety of the collection was equally important to all within the organisation. And although all colleagues have a connection to the collection and know and feel it is important, we all approach it from different angles, for different reasons and we want different things from it.

Network within your organisation

Understanding which activities in the organisation (can) influence each other.

It is important to understand how we as colleagues are related in our daily work. Are there co-dependencies or opposing interest that involve the collection. For example: interests from the point of view collection security might differ from colleagues working in exhibitions.

Identify the internal stakeholders and hold regular meetings to discuss:

- Wants and needs assessment
- Options for cooperation
- Where needs meet / are the same and where to mitigate differences.

Also important is to connect your work to the mission/goals of your organisation. It is easier to get management support and interest if there is a connection between what you want/do and where the organisation is heading or wants to be. Look at your work in collection security in the bigger framework.

And... nothing is as helpful as an incident so make the most of them (although we all do everything in our power to prevent them from happening ☺)

External network based on the location of your organisation: the Governance zone

Integral cooperation in the field of safety and security within a specific geographical area (aka the governance zone)

Participating organisations share information on events that might influence measures of others within the zone. Think about important visitors that draw a lot of attention and/or a large crowd, events like

concerts and exhibitions and demonstrations.

We invest in optimizing communication between all partners and in sharing best practices and doing table top exercises

The National Archives wanted to be part of this network because it is situated next to a large and busy train station in the area of several government buildings and it will be the neighbour of Parliament for a couple of years as there is a huge renovation in their current facility.

External network for heritage institutions in the city of the Hague: the Hague Cultural Prevention Network

To stimulate emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation and to promote research in related areas.

To share experiences: do's and don'ts

To give support and lend a helping hand in case of emergencies (big or small)

What we do within the network

- Development of disaster management plan
- Chair rotates every 2 years / 2 meetings per year
- Projects
 - * Fire damage (with fire dept. and a research component)
 - * Water damage (due to heavy rainfall)
 - * First aid to cultural heritage at your own location
 - * Observation during (evacuation) exercises
- Development website
- Sharing of best practices /experiences
 - * How to deal with i.e. deviant behaviour, theft personnel /public, aggression, uncooperative management, risk mitigation, practical issues like mold, deterioration, salvage materials
- New: app group for alerts (deviant behaviour, theft etc.)
- Workshops/lectures
 - * Events and Collections
 - * First aid app
 - * Illicit traffic
 - * Water damage to paper collections with Van Gogh museum
 - * Fire and water damage exercises with network partners
- General support for policy making , awareness and funding within own organisation
- Actual aid in case of an emergency : packing material, conservation advice, quick risk assessment

Success factors for keeping the network 'working'

- Make time to take part / attend meetings and to develop initiatives
- Dare to share
- Stick to it
- Have fun ☺

International network: Blue Shield international

Working for the protection of the world's cultural heritage by coordinating preparations to meet and respond to emergency situations

Blue Shield Netherlands

examples of participation

Timbuctu : conservation advice

Prague: risk assessment, funding salvage materials, expertise first aid cultural heritage

Cologne: man-power

St. Maarten: funding participants/lecturers, expertise first aid cultural heritage , helping to establish a Caribbean Heritage Emergency Network (CHEN)

Thoughts on participation/collaboration

- * Most contacts via network be it personal or professional
know who you know (and who they know ☺)
- * Official contacts take time and often make it political
be aware of this and don't be discouraged about it..culture sometimes must wait
- * Expertise of volunteers
Make sure volunteers know upfront what is expected of them, things might differ from the way they work but it might be the wish of the organisation they help
- * Historical ties / shared history
*accept that your help might be necessary but not wanted
look for ways to assist in the background or low key or via other routes*
- * Communication/relations with local community/organisations
*realize you are a guest and not the one in charge, take into account what local organizations say they want/need.
Don't overrule them or ignore them*



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