Evaluation of Flood Information Tables in Flood Risk Communication

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The Project FloodScan: Task Information and Communication

Research focus:
Optimize the information of the general public, especially the population in areas at risk, about flood risks via communication and information tools

Basic objective: Evaluation of existing, further developed and new information tools used in flood risk communication from recipients’ perspective

Evaluation of Flood Information Tables in the Flood Plains of three Bavarian Communities

Initiator’s objectives:
- Strengthen people’s flood risk awareness
- People develop a spatial imagination of the local flood plain and possible flood extents
- People know about the ‘100-year flood’ and realise, that it can be higher than past flood events
- People accept the technical flood protection measures
- People get inspired to further inform themselves about the local flood risk situation

Are these objectives fulfilled?

Evaluation methods:
- Semi-standardized questionnaire, predominantly applying open questions (N = 193: 136 residents, 57 visitors)
- Mental maps to analyse resident’s spatial perception of the flood plain (N = 118)

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Evaluation from Recipients’ Perspective

Spatial imagination of the local flood plain and flood extent
- 118 of 129 respondents generally think, that the water could rise
- Flood plain is almost exclusively underestimated or misjudged
- Imagination mainly based on: previous flood experiences, relief elevation, flood protection measures
- Only few respondents attributed their mental maps to the flood information tables

100-year flood:
- 112 of 193 respondents know about the term, 16 defined it correctly, 88 chose the correct of two possible definitions
- The major part (116) confirmed: The tables show that the water can be higher than past events
- The major part (125) did not doubt that the water could rise up to this extent

Flood protection measures:
- 99 of 136 respondents are aware of flood protection measures, mostly technical ones
- According to necessity, sufficiency, fitting character: Known flood protection measures are widely accepted

Risk awareness:
- 120 of 193 respondents are aware of the tables, but they hardly influence peoples’ risk awareness
- Respondent’s reasons: residents know about the risk; tables are little-noticed by residents; predominantly interesting for tourists

Further information:
- Flood information tables hardly inspire the viewers to search for further information about the local flood risk situation

Conclusion and Requirements for future Implementation

Initiator’s objectives only partly fulfilled

According to recipients a revised concept requires e.g.: striking design, but still consistent with historical values, like historical flood marks
- more information displayed on the tables
- less technical terms

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