On the process and impact of vertical and horizontal communication on social learning three decades after the breaking of the Tous Dam in Eastern Spain

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Our presentation looks at the process of the impact of vertical and horizontal communication on social learning after 3 decades of the breaking of the Tous Dam, in Eastern Spain, and how such event has improve the community and multi-level institutional capacities for Integrated Disaster Risk Reduction (IDRR). Empirical work include in-depth interviews together with documentary and archival work Xucar River basin, but also at different levels of governance. Preliminary results show how the Dam break in 1982 triggered a process of institutional innovation and change that led both to a growth and increasing complexity in the organisations involved and resources deployed both for vertical and horizontal communication. However, still many limitations exist regarding the current responses to disaster risk reduction capacity building and learning, and in particular, with respect to the general assessment and management approach used to deal with flash flood risks, currently still seen as separate from other complex social-ecological policy domains, such as integral ecological restoration or climate change adaptation. Our research points out the crucial role of building and managing credibility in order to deploy the right messages at the right time in a situation of potential catastrophic damage.