

Community Resilience Research Summit

Are you waiting for the storm to pass or learning to dance in the rain? Professor Keith Shaw of Northumbria University posed this question to the audience at a recent research summit on rural resilience. Organised by Ann Clark, Research Fellow at CRH UHI and Dr. Sarah Skerratt of the Scottish Agricultural College, the event was funded by the ESRC as part of the Festival of Social Science. A wide range of people with an interest in resilience research came together to hear a selection of academic perspectives on 'resilience' and to set a future agenda for research and policy on this topic. In a lively and humorous presentation, Professor Shaw outlined his view of resilience as a process of transformative change which needs to be built from the community level and expressed concern that a potentially useful approach was in danger of becoming just another buzz word through overuse in too many different policy contexts. Nina Mguni and Chris Jones from the Young Foundation <http://www.youngfoundation.org/our-work/wellbeing-and-resilience> described their work looking at the relationship between resilience, health and wellbeing. Working across a range of communities in England the Foundation has developed 'WARM', a measurement tool for starting conversations about levels of community resilience. Working in schools, with youth gangs and with older people they are also learning lessons about how to build the emotional and social resilience of individuals in a way that promotes positive change and wellbeing. Future work will explore their findings that some people can have low well being but high resilience and vice versa. Other tools for exploring and promoting the resilience of communities highlighted included Carnegie UK's 'Resilience Compass' <http://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/2011/exploring-community-resilience>, and the O4O model of social enterprise development which was outlined by Dr. Sarah-Anne Munoz from CRH <http://www.o4os.eu/>. One of the key debates during the day was how efforts to promote community resilience can address inequalities within and between rural communities. Presentations from the day and a policy briefing will be available shortly on both the CRH and SAC websites.