

Tackling Vulnerability through Gamification: Why, What, and How?

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In a recent publication on the social construction of disasters, the author asked: “Why do we not continually use the knowledge we have to avert disasters?” (Kelman, 2020, p43) Indeed, knowledge on the origins of hazards, the likelihood of their occurring in a specific area as well as methods to prepare for and mitigate their effects has increased extensively in the past decades. Nevertheless, in hazard-prone areas around the world population density and the standardization of housing and infrastructure increases, while knowledge of hazards and of what to do when they occur remains sparse.

In combination with scarce resources and a lack of options, this limited knowledge is a major factor that makes individuals and communities vulnerable to disaster. While all three are linked to complex systemic problems like social inequality, varied degrees of education or cultural taboos, using virtual or on-site games to distribute knowledge about hazards and ways to cope with them is a promising and easily accessible approach that can empower particularly younger people to think about where they live and how they can get ready for future hazards.

After a short introduction into the basics of game design, the presentation will show why gamification is a useful tool to tackle disaster vulnerability caused by lack of knowledge. As a conclusion, ideas on how to implement gamified disaster learning formats will be put to discussion.

Storytelling, Gamification & Co: Using Creative Tools to Design Disaster Cultures in the Anthropocene