COMRADES

Collective Platform for
Community Resilience & Social Innovation During Crises

CAPSSI — Collective Awareness Platforms for Sustainability & Social Innovation

The Open University • Ushahidi • The University Of Sheffield • TU Delft • Gov2u

At a glance

Response to crisis often reveals organisational and technological shortcomings, which threaten community recovery. It is imperative to develop human-centred technologies that take into account actual real world practices of affected populations and responders.

COMRADES aims to empower communities with intelligent socio-technical solutions to help them reconnect, respond to, and recover from crisis situations.

Goals of COMRADES

- **Community Resilience**
  Providing intelligent Information and Communication technologies to boost community resilience, by increasing the ability of a community to take collective actions, and to utilise available resources to self-organise and respond to crises.

- **Community Engagement**
  Platform will be designed and created bottom-up by communities. Project will run several co-design and engagement events with communities, along with theoretical research.

- **Informativeness of Citizen Reports**
  During crises, a very large number of messages are often posted on various social media platforms by using the hashtags dedicated to the crises at hand. COMRADES will produce a set of automatic filters, to efficiently and intelligently identify the messages of sufficient relevance and value.

- **Content and Source Validity Assessment**
  Falsified crises and emergency reports are amongst the biggest concerns of humanitarians and communities towards using social media content during crisis. COMRADES will develop methods to help responders with assessing the validity of content and its source and also provide responders with means for alerting the community through the COMRADES platform and social media of unreliable content and information sources currently circulating.

- **Emergency Events**
  COMRADES aims to develop tools and algorithms for automatically and accurately detecting, modelling, and matchmaking emergency events.

- **Participatory community innovation during crises**
  - The services and platform will be open source using open and linked data, thus facilitating the extension of the platform to other application areas.
  - The COMRADES platform will be accessible over the Web and mobile devices.

Active citizen participation

- The platform will encourage community-wide participation, by enabling local (communities in crisis zones) and remote (digital activists and responders) individuals and communities to come together and share knowledge through their crises reports (community reporters), to produce and access filtered and quality collective information, and to be connected with others based on emergency needs and offers.

- **COMRADES** will involve citizens at two levels:
  - By engaging multiple communities in the requirements, design, and evaluation tasks and
  - By producing a platform to be primarily used by the citizens, to help their communities and fellow citizens. The platform will be based on Ushahidi; a common platform for crises mapping, developed in collaboration with iHub.

Communities

COMRADES will engage with three types of specific communities that are core to effective resilience efforts:

- **Activists (platform deployers):** individuals and groups of people who set up instances of the Ushahidi platform.
- **Responders:** communities that organise and coordinate resources and provide expertise when the Ushahidi platform is deployed.
- **Reporters:** communities who report on crisis.