



Unseen but not unfelt: community resilience to persistent volcanic emissions. Case study from Masaya volcano, Nicaragua

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This paper explores the social life of persistent volcanic emissions (PVE), which unlike the more spectacular and destructive hurricanes, floods and wild fires, occur at a very slow and steady rhythm and yet, their impacts remain largely ignored by the wider Disaster Risk Reduction community. We report on recent findings by an interdisciplinary project UNRESP (<https://unresp.wordpress.com/>) which was a collaboration between social & environmental sciences, history, public health and visual arts. Building on recent fieldwork conducted with rural communities living in the vicinity of Masaya Volcano in Nicaragua, which is one of the largest volcanic polluters in the world, we will show how local residents have developed different kinds of informal knowledge and practices meant to deal with PVEs and expose how those findings might help to recast the concept of resilience to air pollution-related hazards.

We explored the different ways by which local communities have come to know and experience PVEs through the development of informal structural and non-structural measures. We will also highlight how several affective dimensions to the volcano such as smelling and hearing have allowed local residents to develop certain adaptive behaviours to PVEs, which once documented, could help improving the communication of PVEs public advisories by Nicaraguan authorities. Finally, the paper will conclude by highlighting the relevance of social sciences in the development of interdisciplinary research projects such as UNRESP which seek to increase the societal benefits to local communities impacted by persistent hazards.