Apocalypse then! Apocalypse now? Using the Laacher See eruption (13ka BP) for Realistic Disaster Scenario design

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Approximately 13ka BP, the Laacher See volcano (East Eifel volcanic field, Rhenish Shield) erupted cataclysmically. The details of this eruption as well as its impact on climate, environments and human in the near and far fields have been intensely researched offering rich data for designing Realistic Disaster Scenarios that consider, specifically, the potential consequences of renewed volcanic activity in the Eifel and, more generally, the consequences of similar extreme events/natural hazards on societies in Europe. In this paper, I review the available evidence relating to the Late Pleistocene eruption with particular focus on (i) new climate modelling, (ii) the impacts of the tephra-fall on ecosystem services and (iii) the disruption to contemporaneous forager migration and communication networks. Building on this, I reflect on how this evidence has recently fed into a special museum exhibition that places a Laacher See-type eruption in the year 2100 (https://www.moesgaardmuseum.dk/en/exhibitions/after-the-apocalypse/). Combing principles of evidence-based climate communication, Realistic Disaster Scenario thinking and state-of-the-art exhibition design, the exhibition addresses likely impacts on economy, travel/communication networks, politics and culture within the context of Anthropocene warming as projected by the IPCC scenarios.

References: