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Social Justice–Oriented Technical Communications in Global Disaster Management

Global engagement during a disaster is made possible with the formation of transnational assemblages that create space to acknowledge and support suffering marginalized communities. As such, the transnational assemblages' actions and engagements are crucial for global disaster management because they allow for social justice-oriented communication which supports the most vulnerable communities around the globe. As I showcased, transnational assemblages, coalition forming, and digital actions are inevitable during a disaster, and I have chosen to examine the use of social media by disaster responders in performing such actions. With this demonstration, I argue that there is an urgency for both rhetoric and technical communication as a field to explore how the global technical communications praxis helps to address injustices in a contemporary networked world. I further this argument to illustrate how rhetoric and technical communication scholars can perform transdisciplinary research in disaster management to minimize the impacts of catastrophic disasters affecting the world's most vulnerable populations. I conclude that intersectionality and a social justice framework will help contextualize information based on the local circumstances, exposing the potential places where marginalization may occur.

This chapter will describe ways to identify and work with the differing transnational assemblages, create strategies to work with community organizers, and lead disaster response efforts by putting the local knowledge at the center of each endeavor. I end with practical solutions where I depict some approaches for developing social justice-oriented technical communication. Finally, I address the need for future studies and suggest how scholars may incorporate this research in various university courses.

DISASTER RESPONSE IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

It is important to emphasize that the response to a local disaster is not limited to local people or international humanitarian organizations. Disaster response in a globalized world is global, digital, and comprised of the global actors who are from unofficial public spheres. In a catastrophic situation, disaster response efforts are very chaotic and continue to grow and expand based on the need of the people or the organization. Disaster also initiates transnational assemblage where responders (people or organizations) depend on various technologies such as mobile phones, the internet, and social media to motivate a common disaster response. Crisis communication in such assemblages helps to facilitate communications among various actors. Mapping the network, understanding the places where disaster response is happening, and recognizing how communication is moving will serve in easing disaster response efforts. In mapping a disaster network, various actors become involved: disaster relief groups, volunteers, donors, medical service providers, engineers, community leaders, humanitarian organizations, and governments, for example. These actors may work individually within their own assemblages or connect with other transnational assemblages to seek or provide support. Additionally, the use of digital technologies made it easier for the actors to connect and work together and respond to disasters.

The transnational assemblages that were formed during the Nepal earthquake and Hurricane Maria were motivated by affect and supported by social media in the form of information, pictures, hashtags, or online communities. People's interactions on Twitter during the two disasters transformed the Twittersphere into an updated information-providing platform that allowed easy access not just for people, but also for governments, volunteers, different aid agencies, and organizations. Transnational assemblages have a social and political impact and could really do significant work during a time of disaster, as I demonstrated in this book. As more users around the globe have made social media a part of their lives, the role of social media platforms in disaster response efforts will likely be even more prominent (Kim and Hastak; Potts et al.). The formation of transnational assemblages via digital activism displayed by people using social media in Nepal and Puerto Rico has undeniably helped communities and people who are in need, even though these users mostly provided information which led to the communities receiving various aids to survive. Twitter

aided the disaster response efforts by bringing people from around the world together to form transnational assemblages that are emerging and autonomous in pursuing a common response to the disaster. They are non-hierarchical and are welcoming to anyone who wants to be a part of such an organized space (Marcus and Saka). Additionally, these assemblages are powerful because they challenge authorities or governments or news media and work toward the greater good of the community. As I have demonstrated, where the Nepali and Puerto Rican governments could not reach, the transnational assemblages reached, and where justice failed, transnational assemblages asserted themselves to create an inclusive space that fought for justice.

During a disaster, transnational assemblages act autonomously and encompass the rhetorical agency of humans who are supported by non-human elements, such as mobile phones, the internet, laptops, relief materials, food, and medical services. That is why the impact of digital technologies in the disaster response is very apparent as per the case studies discussed previously. In detaching themselves from one whole and assembling into another, the rhetorical agency of each assemblage plays a vital role. Amy Koerber defines rhetorical agency as "negotiation among competing alternative discourses, that grants individuals some ability to reject discursive elements that they find problematic" (94). Both Nepalis and Puerto Ricans did not abide by the narratives that the government, the media, and the larger humanitarian organizations were promoting. Rather, they were listening closely to their communities and knew that their communities required more support than what the official narratives believed and propagated. Nepalis' and Puerto Ricans' self-organized transnational assemblages embodied rhetorical agency by displaying what Natasha N. Jones in her article "Rhetorical Narratives of Black Entrepreneurs . . ." refers to as "a) an awareness of the rhetorical situation, including exigency, Kairos, and an understanding of existing discourses or arguments, and b) the ability, opportunity, or rhetorical space to act" (325). Such self-organization in both disasters was quicker, more efficient, and more effective due to the space provided by digital technologies to exercise agency, conduct discourses, and initiate disaster relief actions. Hence, digital technologies have a greater role and importance in the context of large-scale disasters.

Transnational assemblages embody the characteristics of becoming and the constant process of transformation (Slack and Wise), which is

why, as the disaster situation emerges, the response systems and these assemblages also emerge. Disaster responders, actors, volunteers, and organizations can continue to monitor the transformation as these assemblages keep growing, transforming, or shrinking based on the needs and requirements of the post-disaster context. As I have demonstrated, transnational assemblages during a catastrophic disaster involve actors who live locally or globally, who are engaged within the local spaces, or who have ties to the local spaces. Therefore, as these transnational assemblages emerge globally, they could utilize the existing and new spaces by forging newer articulations, such as creating physical spaces or, in the present context, creating spaces on the web or other internet-based platforms. These assemblages could also establish member roles or the elements of the assemblages (DeLanda; Slack and Wise). Transnational assemblages evolve to achieve objectives or certain tasks; however, those tasks are under constant modifications based on the shifting demands, which is why spontaneous actions and decision-making happen. In this process, sometimes in the process of formation the elements of assemblages might become disconnected and may lose their relevance or become less influential. These transnational assemblages are motivated by affect and possess agency to respond to a global phenomenon like a disaster. They occupy spaces via digital mediums where pictures, videos, and texts, embedded in the form of information, create an intense action that motivates various actors and elements of the assemblage to act.

During both the Nepal and Puerto Rico disasters, social media became an important platform where crisis publics could seek, share, interpret, and disperse information to their networks and create a community to challenge the ongoing injustices and socio-political dilemmas. In seeking and gathering the information, crisis publics became part of various transnational assemblages that worked together to challenge the socio-political systems of oppressions that created obstructions during these two disasters. These crisis publics who emerge during a disaster might not follow official protocols that might lead to quick decision-making. Social media also allowed crisis publics to perform crisis communications within their assemblages, as suggested by Finn Frandsen and Winni Johansen by a) communicating to each other, b) communicating with each other, c) communicating against each other or the official narratives shared by the government, d) communicating past each other, and e) communicating about each other

(433). This variety of crisis communication flows played an important part in conducting activism on multiple platforms and evoking emotions that motivated people to take part in disaster relief efforts. Communication flows allowed these transnational assemblages to continue to grow and make an impact on the political level. As articulated by the participants in my study who did not represent any organizations, their communication was not moderated by any organizational protocol. However, crisis communications within their own assemblages were oriented toward gathering truthful information, verifying it with the community, and using that information to work toward providing disaster relief to the community.

As my results demonstrated, communication during a crisis can be enhanced through digital technologies and social media because they allow for quicker delivery of information to a larger public. With access to various technological tools, as Liza Potts argues in *Social Media in Disaster Response*, technology experts and scientists could work hand in hand with social scientists, including technical communicators, to respond more effectively to crises. The rhetorical situation of each disaster is different, and it presents unique challenges in communication. In the crisis situations created by the two disasters I have addressed, communications were mediated by official and unofficial organizations through self-organized crisis publics in transnational assemblages. The formation of transnational assemblages in the digital web facilitated communications by building "a series of locality-based activities and organizations around a key function in the network" (Castells 443). These transnational assemblages composed of crisis publics helped in spreading urgent messages that informed audiences, making people aware of the situation, and encouraging precautionary measures.

SOCIAL JUSTICE-ORIENTED TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION IN DISASTER RESPONSE

It is important to emphasize that we continue to live through compounding crises and disasters. Thus, we should understand that without social justice at the core of disaster response and communication, we will continue to lose lives and create harm to suffering communities. We must also understand that various catastrophic events establish differing rhetorical situations, which is contextual to the place, time, people, culture, histories, and socio-political situation

of the affected communities. As Haas and Eble remind us, "Social justice approaches to technical communication are often informed by cultural theories and methodologies, but they also explicitly seek to redistribute and reassemble—or otherwise redress—power imbalances that systematically and systemically disenfranchise some stakeholders while privileging others" (4). Hence, social justice-oriented technical communication in disaster response will help in challenging the unequal systems of power that mobilize during a disaster and provide grounding and flexibility to address changed newer forms of socially unjust situations created by disasters. Disasters are a geopolitical issue, and Dinesh Paudel and Gregory Reck argue that the current structure of the global system governed by global capital based on geopolitical inequities and unequal systems of power creates varying levels of vulnerability, including those relevant to disasters (n.p.). For example, one community receiving more relief because of their "visibility" while others are ignored because of their "invisibility" constitutes an unjust situation (Cedillo). The COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the Gaza war are yet other examples where we see and experience how inequalities, injustices, and biases are manifested in disaster response and management efforts. However, as I have showcased in previous chapters, people do respond to such situations affectively by sharing their lived experiences and those of others through the assorted modes of communication and by actively working to respond to disaster situations. For example, in the cases of Nepal and Puerto Rico, transnational assemblages emerged as a powerful force that challenged the established systems, norms, and policies and moved beyond geographies to support the most vulnerable populations.

By grounding their work in non-Western and decolonial values, the participants motivated by affective reactions were able to articulate the injustices affecting the damaged communities, revealing those injustices on social media platforms, and calling people to take action to reject such injustices. They also collaborated transnationally to form coalitions to tackle such injustices (Walton et al.). In both disasters, the communications and work distribution within various transnational assemblages helped in forming alliances or coalitions that became a larger assemblage (e.g., a social justice movement), which created social justice goals for disaster response efforts (DeLanda). These goals were achieved by implementing a

disaster response effort informed by a) non-Western and decolonial practices and b) affective dimensions of the experiences of the marginalized and vulnerable populations living through social injustices. These practices of affectively helping a community spontaneously allowed the participants to create transnational connections that further helped communities in need.

Based on my participants' narratives, I define the non-Western and decolonial ways of crisis communication in the context of the Nepal earthquake and Hurricane Maria as alternative crisis communication performed by individuals unrelated to any official or international organizations to curate, share, and validate information for the larger public by using varied publicly accessible digital technologies and platforms. Nepalis and Puerto Ricans were using various social media platforms for networking and sharing information during both disasters; they were also using social media platforms for non-Western and decolonial disaster response claiming social media space as their own to conduct crisis communications. The creation of alternative processes for giving and receiving aid, in addition to cross-diasporic communicative opportunities, were significant for decentralizing the aid in Puerto Rico and also in Nepal. Crisis communication during a disaster should be practiced with social justice at the core of its purpose, highlighting and voicing the experiences of marginalized and vulnerable communities. In the aftermath of both disasters, the actors who were involved in crisis communication were focused on uplifting communities, helping people in need, and creating alternative spaces for people to voice their concerns and opinions.

By understanding the work of the transnational assemblages' crisis communication and distributed work practices, scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and technical and professional communication (TPC) teachers can work toward developing stronger mechanisms to understand people's vulnerabilities during a disaster. Allowing communication during a crisis to be shaped by affective dimensions of people's lived experiences will help in mitigating the challenges of the disaster via social justice-oriented crisis communication and distributed work. It is important for practitioners, researchers, and disaster responders who dedicate their life and work to responding to emergencies to adjust crisis communication toward ending social injustices. Furthermore, while performing any kind of disaster response, the cultural context, and issues of injustices within such contexts of the

affected space should be taken into consideration. Without such adaptation, there is a danger of further amplifying social injustices. Technical communication scholars, practitioners, and teachers are powerful information and communication mediators during any kind of crisis. As experts in communicating complex information, disaster researchers and crisis communicators can collaboratively work with engineers and scientists to design a social justice-oriented disaster response effort (Baniya, "How Technical Communicators"). Such a social justice-oriented disaster response effort could ground the actors' work in understanding the cultural, social, political, and economic intersections of the affected community. In the following sections, I present the ways in which social justice-oriented disaster response efforts can be designed in diverse spaces.

Intersectionality in Disaster Response

Disaster response in the current context can be a social action. Such response should be grounded in an intersectional perspective such that disaster responders understand how risk, adaptability, social vulnerability, and historical injustice intersect with each other and how they marginalize people with certain identities. The participants I have interviewed suggest that they witnessed institutional inequalities in disaster response and aid distribution efforts that privileged one group or community and discriminated against others. Hence, incorporating an intersectional perspective in disaster response efforts allows the responders to get a deeper understanding of how systemic violence and discrimination are rooted and how such discrimination manifests itself during the aftermath of a disaster. This approach also allows the disaster responders to understand that there is an interconnection of people, social problems, and ideas (Collins; Crenshaw). This approach further brings together ideas from disparate places, times, and perspectives and enables people to share points of view that were formerly forbidden, outlawed, or simply obscured (Collins). This approach is very important when responding to a disaster because "disaster response" is a social action and intersectionality helps in redefining what such social action could look like. Such social action could mean that we take race, gender, caste system, and other social hierarchies into account because often, such social hierarchies become the determining factors of who bears the brunt of emergencies and who is the last to recover from such calamities (Klopp et al).

Understanding the Role of Local and Global Actors within Transnational Assemblages

The work of actors who emerge during a disaster is dynamic, powerful, and social justice-oriented. Hence, the major disaster responders need to identify those actors and understand their work within the transnational assemblages. Doing so can lead to faster disaster response and recovery. As I have mentioned time and again, local disasters become global concerns, and there is an emergence of countless actors both locally and globally. Observing and becoming aware of the formation of such groups of actors will help in mobilizing people to support the vulnerable communities. Various transnational assemblages perform crisis communication via distributed work to ensure social justice, which helps contextualize information based on the local context. Therefore, larger organizations with resources should work collaboratively with these emerging actors to move toward understanding the issues of social justice and to collectively attempt to solve such concerns during a disaster. Spaces like social media platforms play a prominent role in disaster response efforts, a role that should be enhanced with the lessons from past disasters. Practitioners and researchers should work together to develop a mechanism that allows actors to connect with multiple transnational assemblages to tackle the consequences of a disaster.

Honoring Local Knowledges and Practices

Finally, in disaster response, it is often the case that local knowledge and practices are not listened to and honored as the chaotic situation creates imbalances in power structure. While, in writing a lot of times, it is said that we have to honor local knowledges and practices, in actual situation of disaster, this is something that is overlooked. When that happens, there will be a mismatch between what the community needs and what aid communities actually receive. Disaster responders, researchers, and practitioners should honor the people from vulnerable spaces and people with marginalized identities. Listening to the stories of struggle, historical marginalization, and how such marginalization creates newer forms of inequities should be discussed openly with the community. The affective responses of the local community during disasters should be considered while communicating and researching crises as doing so acknowledges the lived experiences, values, and suffering of the affected community. This means that while conducting

disaster response, community-based knowledge should be part of the planning and response efforts because without community knowledge and without honoring the community practices, the effects of compounding disasters cannot be averted quickly. Organizations can collaborate with various actors from transnational assemblages who have experiences of collaborating with the community. This will help in creation of a committee where community leaders are in consultation and will help brainstorming issues and solutions to those problems in a way that honors the community's identity and practices.

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS: HOW CAN TECHNICAL COMMUNICATORS SUPPORT DISASTER RESPONSE?

Crisis communications conducted by crisis publics via transnational assemblages can facilitate disaster response because they convey messages and share information through multiple channels of communication, such as mobile phones, SMS, emails, tweets, and Facebook and WhatsApp messages. These messages include information regarding the need for relief materials, calls for volunteers, and requests for funding, which can be regarded as the "flows in an assemblage" (DeLanda). The communication performed by the crisis publics during both the Nepal and Puerto Rico disasters provided a public voice for communities who were being ignored. Such communications were flexible, adaptive, and did not have any official protocols. While repurposing such messages with social media functions like sharing, retweeting, liking, replying, and sometimes rewriting and translating, the crisis communication practices during these two crises blurred the boundaries between the official and unofficial networks. Crisis communications are mostly employed in an organizational context (Walaski); however, my data suggests that because the context of the world is continuously evolving during a crisis (for example number of casualties or any new information about crisis), hence, crisis communication is also always transforming. In this context, catastrophic disasters invite multiple stakeholders, organizations, and several evolving assemblages to communicate about the crisis and the aid necessary to ease the disaster response efforts. To manage a successful disaster response, stronger crisis communication mechanisms that involve and highlight the role of the community and the people who are affected by disaster response efforts are required (Coombs and Holladay; Horsley and Barker; Walaski).

The suffering and need during catastrophic disasters create a chaotic situation which generates communication crises as people begin seeking information, with many individuals and organizations emerging who curate and share information. Potts (*Social Media in Disaster Response*) argues that people need information immediately, so they dig through the entire system to find that information. They communicate and reach out to other people who might have expertise or who might be a reliable source of information. During the first weeks after the disaster events, the Nepal earthquake and Hurricane Maria changed the dynamics and the rhetorical nature of crisis communication. The public moved from being passive receivers of crisis communication to becoming active responders, interpreters, and transmitters of information (Coombs and Holladay). These active roles, as my analysis of the narratives suggests, allowed the actors to take on prominent roles in decentralizing communication on social medial platforms, as "the decentralized communications structure in most social media means that these platforms provide different communicative affordances during disasters" (Murthy and Gross 357). This can be seen in actors' interpretations of messages, individual expressions, and criticisms of official organizations. During a time of a disaster, digital tools empower local people's voices more so than they do those of professional communicators of major media outlets (Frost).

We now know that crisis communication during a disaster is multidimensional and involves various official and unofficial actors. Technical communicators can play a greater role to provide accurate information and tackle misinformation by working closely with experts, scientists, journalists, and other officials. To take on the consequences of any disaster, collaborative work is essential. This sort of collaborative work in the digital age takes the form of transnational assemblages that incorporate transcultural communities who are spread across the world and time zones, but who come together to face the consequences of a disaster, which can be regarded as "distributed work" (Pigg). To address injustices during or after a crisis, professional communicators have a civic responsibility in ensuring equity and justice. In the following sections, I present specific recommendations for technical communicators based on the results of my study and my discussion.

Transnational Crisis Publics

This project has showcased the work of transnational crisis publics for social justice. As I described in the introduction and illustrated

throughout the book, transnational crisis publics emerge from often ignored spaces to support marginalized communities as communicators and advocates during a disaster. Handling catastrophic disasters and crises requires careful consideration of communities, their suffering, and their contexts. In this chaotic context, transnational crisis publics emerge to facilitate crisis communication in their respective communities and challenge the privileged narratives. The rhetorical agency of the transnational crisis publics as well as how they come together to negotiate power and privilege to challenge the systems of oppression needs to be recognized. In a chaotic situation, larger crisis-handling organizations need to identify the emerging and emergent ever-changing various transnational crisis publics. They need to understand that crisis public interactions are non-static, that they blur the boundaries of local and global, official, and unofficial rhetorics. It is imperative that we understand the interconnectedness created via transnational assemblages to better understand the deep-rooted intricacies that any disaster might unravel. Technical communicators can help identify such transnational crisis publics and create a channel of communication via which a partnership can be forged for responding to the crisis.

Context- and Culture-Specific Crisis Communication

Crisis communication has changed over the past 40 years. Such communications emerge during crises that are becoming increasingly global as their causes and consequences transcend national and cultural boundaries (Schwarz et al.). I have argued that Western knowledge-making practices may create difficulties in facilitating communication in the current risk or crisis environments (Boiarsky) because of a lack of a) contextual local knowledge, b) awareness of audience needs and requirements, and c) understanding of social justice and intercultural communications practices (Jones et al.). Hence, technical communicators who have a strong background in understanding context, audiences, and intercultural communication can support crisis communication efforts through providing context- and culture-specific crisis communication. Even though this audience-specific or cultural-specific communication is not new in the field, sometimes while communicating during a crisis, this gets ignored, and context-specific disaster response and communication don't happen. Hence, this is a reminder to various technical communicators and disaster responders that in any disaster-specific situation, context and culture need to be taken into consideration. This can

happen in multiple different ways such as using local languages, cultural and contextual symbols, and representation of the local community and their knowledge in the communications materials produced. Utilizing the knowledge of document design and ability to communicate complex information to the public, technical communicators can help people who are suffering to get exact information that they need based on the context of the community.

Crisis Communication for Social Justice

Crisis communications should incorporate a social justice framework that can support the marginalized and vulnerable communities affected by disasters (Walton et al.). Communications in such circumstances should be understood from a perspective that focuses on the receiver and represents the various voices of the marginalized population. As such, communications should not privilege one single voice, such as that of the government or a larger non-governmental organization (NGO). Crisis communication should help in making the communication effective during the disaster. Thus, technical communicators should become advocates for incorporating social justice-oriented crisis communication into disaster response efforts where they can specifically understand the ways in which marginalization happens in post-disaster situations and investigate the newer forms of social injustices that could happen (Walton et al.). Technical communicators can play a vital role in communicating during disaster with social justice by determining how various transnational assemblages are constructed, how various other networks of distribution of aid and information are formed and by whom, toward what ends, as well as the stakeholders, power dynamics, distributed agency, and directions of the material and information flows within the networks (Haas and Eble 4). Lastly, technical communicators can establish coalitions by working together with community-based organizers or the transnational assemblages themselves to create a space for advocacy.

Representing Community Voices in Crisis Communication

Technical communicators should explore, investigate, and challenge practices that marginalize their targeted audiences within their respective institutions and during the situations of a disaster (Walton et al.; Ding). While working in a high-pressure environment and situation like a crisis, technical communicators should really represent the voices of

a community that is suffering. Rose et al. remind us that developing collaboration embedded in community helps in trust and access to community members and creates an easier pathway to serve them. Technical communicators can collaborate with the community and work together to address the issues during a disaster. The situation of the catastrophe requires very sensitive and effective communication and a developed trust with the community because crisis changes the dynamics, needs, and reactions of the community that is suffering. One way to observe such dynamic communication, needs, and reactions is by observing social media platforms. Social media platforms create the possibility for understanding the public reaction to a disaster in real time, while also allowing for the emergence of crisis publics that embrace the role of disaster management (Murthy and Gross, Baniya "How Technical Communicators", Potts). Thus, social media can become a space where technical communicators can observe how crisis communication is happening within the communities, identify key actors or influencers, and work toward amplifying the voices of the people. TPC researchers can further explore ways of strengthening crisis communication mechanisms for a successful disaster response in non-Western and decolonial contexts, ones that foreground the role of the community and disaster responders, and ones that ensure social justice by voicing the concerns and opinions of the marginalized and vulnerable communities.

PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

Pedagogically, this research supports instructors who want to teach the conventions of TPC in transnational communication, research methodologies, and the rhetoric of disaster. In this regard, I would like to return to the argument about narrative and storytelling as an important aspect that can be taught within a classroom. Storytelling has been a major concept in cultural rhetoric and various indigenous rhetorics (King et al.; Powell). As Jacqueline Jones Royster argues, stories have the capacity to unmask truths as they have vital layers of the transformative process (35). Students can be taught to take up narrative and storytelling as a lesson in learning how to analyze and produce crisis communication in transnational contexts. In Appendix D, I share an example of a senior undergraduate-level capstone course called Disaster and Crisis Communication. In other courses, instructors who teach genres like research reports or white papers could incorporate disaster research into their assignments.

Specifically, an assignment could focus on researching a particular disaster and communication during that crisis with a focus on storytelling and narrative and producing specific products. This would allow students to think of the varieties of communication practices and technologies that were used to address the disaster. This assignment could also be expanded upon by incorporating digital communication and design (see assignment example in Appendix E) where students can work in groups to establish communication plans for addressing a crisis. Instructors could also create courses on topics such as rhetoric of disaster, transnational communication approaches, or mixed-methods research. An aspect of crisis or risk communication could be incorporated into service courses, such as business communication, technical writing, or rhetoric and writing courses that serve various departments in universities.

Service-learning or civic engagement courses could also be developed in partnership with local or international organizations or to help the students prepare for local and global risks. In these courses, students could gain experience working through various digital platforms, such as Slack, Google Docs, X (formerly Twitter), and Trello. Moreover, a service-learning course within the business or technical writing fields could focus on risk communication and/or risk assessment. The course could be developed in partnership with a community member and focus on the development of disaster preparedness materials, various user documents, grant writing, fundraising, and methods that the organization can use when responding to a disaster. This course could help students understand how risk or crisis is communicated in a workplace setting, and they could help community partners gain support to be prepared for any disaster or crisis. As my research demonstrates, various actors within the disaster emerge organically from within their societies; hence, our own students sitting in our classes may become key actors who respond to future disasters. As disaster concerns everyone and could affect anyone in countless different ways, preparing students to communicate ethically, transparently, and quickly during a disaster situation can also help to contribute to the disaster response.

CONCLUSION

The global community is currently challenged by multiple disasters (including a global pandemic, multiple different wars). Technical and

professional communication researchers and practitioners have a set of skills and knowledge in terms of writing, interdisciplinary collaboration, communication, and public engagement to support communities facing natural disasters. Such responses require collaborative work, and, in such collaboration, technical communicators can play a greater role that helps in making the communication systems flexible and adaptive. In turn, these systems can help save the lives of people who are suffering during and after a calamity. Such knowledge can be used in future research which explores the specific roles of technical communicators that respond to a crisis.

In my research, I have only focused on immediate disaster response. And, due to the scope of the research, I was only able to shine a spotlight on limited aspects of these two disasters. Several years later, Nepalis are still bearing the consequences of the Nepal earthquake, and Puerto Ricans are also still struggling to recover from Hurricane Maria while multiple crises have happened in between. Reconstruction activities are already often hampered by local and international politics, but now, people must respond to other setbacks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, while they are still recovering from the previous disasters. For my research, I used Twitter data to represent the populations who are present on social media and have access to Twitter. Many of these actors may not have been physically impacted by the disasters, but collectively, they were in a position to respond to the disasters by forming or joining transnational assemblages with people who were physically impacted. Future researchers can focus on learning about the coping mechanisms developed in marginalized societies that have been traumatized. They might also examine how people recover and reconstruct their lives and communities after disasters.

The study of disaster and environmental crisis is a growing area. As the world continues to suffer from countless natural disasters and risks caused or intensified by climate change, researchers need to collaborate to mitigate the challenges put forth by disasters. In this way, governmental and non-governmental organizations can work with disaster researchers to enhance their communication and documentation practices. Researchers can focus on understanding the evolving communication practices during disasters and study how crisis communications can be enhanced with the support of technology during and after the disaster. Other potential areas of research in crisis communications could enhance our understanding of disaster philanthropy, social

entrepreneurship in disaster zones, community-based disaster risk management, and user experience in disaster response mechanisms. Besides Nepal and Puerto Rico, there are other marginalized countries where people suffer from the consequences of climate change and natural disasters. Researchers can also expand the scope of their research to these areas. And ultimately, I argue, we might join our research to support the transnational assemblages working for justice.

In this book, I have established a rhetorical framework grounded in lived experiences and intersectionality that opens pathways to improving disaster response both locally and globally. As such, this book and this framework invite contributions from scholars by developing, creating, and transferring knowledge via writing and advocacy. I posit that prioritizing marginalized voices and their grounded knowledge, rhetorical agency, and coalitional networks will enhance disaster response, which is not a focus of many studies in humanities and rhetorical studies. As the world suffers through compounding disasters, scholars in a variety of humanities disciplines, including technical communication, history, social sciences, and philosophy, argue for transdisciplinary approaches to provide unique solutions to global issues. As rhetoric and technical communication scholars, we need to rethink how we can contribute to the frontline response during a disaster. We have now survived the deadliest pandemic in history, and simultaneously, all other disasters due to climate change haven't stopped. As a result, there is an urgency for our field to rethink how we speak to the broader world issues by capturing social, historical, cultural, and communicative perspectives during any kinds of disaster and by providing a rhetorical and humanistic approach to prepare people for future disasters. As rhetorical and technical communication scholars, we need to develop strategies to showcase and openly talk about systems of oppression, colonial issues, and how marginalized people resist those circumstances, and we need to weave those stories and lived experiences into our scholarship and represent them in academic and non-academic spaces. Hence, this book calls upon scholars and practitioners to think about how they can challenge the dominant narrative, intentionally seek marginalized perspectives, and privilege the voices of the world's most vulnerable and marginalized populations, who are affected by the consequences of any big or small disasters.

Crises will continue to upend our lives. This is a crucial time to rethink our scholarship and how our work can support raising awareness about issues of disasters, climate change, and equity. I call on

scholars to reimagine the work of disaster response and crisis communication and to explore how such reimagination can benefit not only scholarly communities but also practitioners of disaster response, volunteers, governments, and grassroots organizers.