The Center for Rebuilding Sustainable Communities after Disasters (CRSCAD, pronounced "CRIS-CAD") is a relatively recent addition to the UMass Boston campus. It was founded and is led by its director, Professor Adenrele Awotona, PhD, who has broad international background in architecture, sustainable community development, and post-disaster reconstruction. Formally established on July 6, 2008, CRSCAD is affiliated with the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies.

CRSCAD came into being as a response to a perceived need. Disasters were growing in number and increasing in intensity. Today, CRSCAD remains the only academic center in the world committed to plumbing and probing this realm while seeking to advance consequential modes and means to disaster response after the cameras leave. One way we achieve this is through our course offerings on global post-disaster studies with a focus on vulnerable populations.

Notable accomplishments

2013

- At the invitation of the Institute for Defense and Government Advancement, Professor Adenrele Awotona, director of the Center for Rebuilding Sustainable Communities after Disasters, was a featured speaker at the "Homeland Security 2013" international conference, which took place in Washington, DC, in mid-October.

- At the invitation of the United States Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Professor Adenrele Awotona briefed a high-level delegation from Russia's national emergency management agency, EMERCOM, on the work being done by the center. Led by Minister Shoigu and Deputy Minister Tsailikov, the visit took place in early April at FEMA Region I headquarters in Boston.

- Cambridge Scholars, an academic publisher in England, selected the collection, edited by Adenrele Awotona, *Rebuilding Sustainable Communities with Vulnerable Populations after the Cameras Have Gone* as their Critics’ Choice title for their January *Book of the Month* newsletter. According to editor Stephanie Cavanagh, Awotona's book was chosen "due to its strong sales and excellent reviews."

- At the invitation of the National Council for Science and the Environment, Professor Adenrele Awotona was a panelist at the "13th National Conference on Science, Policy and the Environment: Disasters and Environment: Science, Preparedness, and Resilience." The conference took place January 15–17 in Washington, DC. Participating in the session "Cities and Disasters," Awotona and other experts explored the unique challenges of densely populated cities and how they respond to disasters. Awotona's presentation "Cities, Disasters and the Urban Risk Divide" examined the discrepancy between "well-planned and well-built wealthy cities" and urban slums regarding disaster mitigation, preparedness, and risk reduction.

- With the Office of Emergency Management and Business Continuity at the University of Massachusetts Boston, the center hosted "When a City Falls: Earthquake Response, Recovery, and Restoration in Christchurch and the Canterbury Region of New Zealand."

- Professor Adenrele Awotona attends the Fourth Session of "The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction," organized by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, which took place in Geneva, Switzerland, May 19–23. The session’s central aim was to develop a strategy on disaster risk reduction that would replace or revise the existing Hyogo Framework for Action, approved by all UN member states in 2005 following the Indian Ocean tsunami. In addition to presenting/discussing CRSCAD’s capacity-building activities with various delegates, Professor Awotona joined in several dialogues on progress in risk reduction and resilience building and created new partnerships and alliances for CRSCAD.
• Professor Adesoji Jiboye, chair of the Department of Architecture at the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ife-Ife, Nigeria, visited CRSCAD to discuss ongoing research projects in both institutions, to explore opportunities for possible collaborations, and to discuss OAU’s participation in the May 2014 international conference at UMass Boston.

2012

• Edited by Adenrele Awotona, Rebuilding Sustainable Communities with Vulnerable Populations after the Cameras Have Gone: A Worldwide Study is published by Cambridge Scholars.

• Professor Adenrele Awotona contributes to The Encyclopedia of Housing (2nd edition), edited by Andrew T. Carswell. The 928-page volume was published by SAGE. Awotona’s entry deals with various aspects of rural and urban housing in Africa within the context of deep-rooted uneven development and economic growth.

• The center hosts an international conference, "Rebuilding Sustainable Communities after Disasters in China and Japan: Best Practices and Lessons Learned," in collaboration with the United States Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); the College of Advancing and Professional Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston; Renmin University, Beijing, China; Sichuan University, Chengdu, China; Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, China; Shanghai Jiaotong University, Shanghai, China; Dalian University of Technology, Dalian, China; and Ritsumeikan Research Center for Sustainability Science, Japan.

• In collaboration with the faculty of medicine at the Universitas Airlangga (FMUA), Surabaya, Indonesia, the center organized a successful 10-day intensive course, "Disaster Management." Hosted by FMUA June 11–21, the course included interactive lectures, seminars, workshops, and plenary discussions led by distinguished Indonesian academics and practitioners as well as CRSCAD faculty. Participants included medical doctors (practitioners and educators), government officials, and other disaster professionals.

• The center, the College of Advancing and Professional Studies, and the University of Massachusetts Boston’s Office of International & Transnational Affairs signed two Academic Unit Specific Memoranda of Understanding—with the Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia, and Salahaddin University, Erbil, Iraq—to promote the following activities: study-abroad programs in various formats for students, faculty, and staff; transnational research activities of both faculty and students, as well as staff researchers; the exchange and sharing of instructional and academic research-related information and academic publications; and third party–funded educational and research activities.

• CRSCAD introduced two new certificate programs in emergency management through the College of Advancing and Professional Studies (CAPS). The noncredit programs combine the academic resources in post-disaster reconstruction at CRSCAD with the expertise of the DelValle Institute for Emergency Preparedness, a program of the Boston Public Health Commission. One program covers “All Hazards Emergency Response and Protection,” whereas the other teaches “Inclusive Emergency Planning.” Each includes a module of coursework offered through DelValle, combined with a noncredit three-course sequence by CRSCAD through CAPS.

• In March, Professor Adenrele Awotona participated, at the University of Salahaddin, in the Erbil Forum's second international conference on Sustainable Urban Transportation. He presented a paper, “Rebuilding Erbil with Quality; Rebuilding Erbil Sustainably,” that examined a number of basic questions decision makers in Erbil must ask, and find answers to, in order to begin to rebuild the city sustainably.

• On April 1, Professor Adenrele Awotona led a workshop at Salahaddin University-Erbil in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq on the role of geographic information systems (GIS) in the holistic development of urban areas.

• In February, Professor Adenrele Awotona participated in a two-day Iraqi-American Universities Conference at the invitation of the Iraqi Embassy in Washington, DC. In attendance were several university presidents and higher education officials from Iraq, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, senior officials of the U.S. Departments of Education and State, and representatives of several U.S. universities. The conference explored ways in which U.S. universities could support higher education in Iraq.

• CRSCAD and United Planet’s collaboration started in January. The new partnership is designed to promote CRSCAD's global post-disaster graduate certificate programs to United Planet’s graduate and senior-year undergraduate volunteers.

2011

• CRSCAD introduces two programs through the College of Advancing and Professional Studies: the 18-credit Global Post-Disaster Studies Certificate Program; and the noncredit Global Post-Disaster Reconstruction and Management Program.

• The center hosts an international Workshop on Innovation, Diversity and Sustainable Development in Areas of Social Vulnerability in collaboration with the Chair of Multiculturalism, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil.
• On May 16, the center participated in an international conference hosted by the University of As-Syafi’iyah in Jakarta, Indonesia, and Professor Adenrele Awotona visited an orphanage in Jakarta, Indonesia, for the children survivors of the 2004 tsunami in Banda Aceh and Great Aceh, Indonesia.

• At the International Scientific Workshop on Sustainable Development, held at the Salahaddin University-Erbil in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in December 2011, Professor Adenrele Awotona presented a paper on aspects of capacity building for sustainable post-disaster reconstruction. Representing CRSCAD, Professor Awotona was one of five founding members of the Erbil Forum, an initiative that grew out of the conference focused on research, implementation, and evaluation of policies, strategies, methods, and technologies of sustainable urban and regional growth in the Middle East.

• On June 29, CRSCAD was invited to lead a participatory community-based workshop at the University of Alabama on "Rebuilding Sustainable Communities for Children and Their Families after the April 2011 Tornado in Tuscaloosa, Jefferson County (Birmingham, Pleasant Grove, and Fultondale) and Environs." After seeing the damage in storm-wracked neighborhoods, President Obama said that he had "never seen devastation like this" and promised the residents that "we're going to make sure you're not forgotten."

2008
• The Center for Rebuilding Sustainable Communities after Disasters officially opens to provide expertise in all-hazards emergency response and protection, inclusive emergency planning, risk communication, continuity of operations planning, urban planning, architectural design, environmental justice, and community resilience. The center is unique globally in its dedication to finding the most effective interdisciplinary approaches to sustainable post-disaster reconstruction, with a focus on vulnerable populations.

• Edited by Adenrele Awotona, *Rebuilding Sustainable Communities in Iraq: Policies, Programs and International Perspectives* is published by Cambridge Scholars.


• With the University of As-Syafi’iyah, Jakarta, Indonesia the center cohosted an international workshop on reconstruction after the 2004 tsunami in Banda Aceh and Great Aceh, Indonesia.


• The Center for Rebuilding Sustainable Communities after Disasters hosted an international workshop, "Counter Terrorism Anti-Corruption—A Regional Project for the Western Hemisphere," in collaboration with WorldBoston and the International Visitor Program of the United States Department of State. Participants were from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

To learn more about the Center for Rebuilding Sustainable Communities after Disasters, please visit: www.umb.edu/crscad.