Language and Crisis Communication in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Abstract

The chapter introduces *The Palgrave Handbook of Language and Crisis Communication in Sub-Saharan Africa*. It provides the rationale for why it is critical that we have a volume that takes a sustained look at the scope, purpose and practical application of crisis and disaster management communication in this critical region of the African continent. In particular, the chapter lays the foundation that enables a nuanced appreciation of two critical issues. The first pertains to sub-Saharan Africa's (SSA's) vulnerability to both natural and human-made phenomena. Secondly, we therefore argue that communication plays a critical role in so far as the identification, social construction, raising awareness, preparation, mitigation and eradication of crises and disasters in the region. Furthermore, communication plays a critical role in potentially reducing the impacts of crises and disasters before their occurrence. The chapter then offers a number of definitions that are used when engaging with crisis and disaster management communication. The introductory chapter concludes by engaging with why crisis and disaster communication is crucial to SSA vis-à-vis the region's vulnerability profile to disasters.