

# CAPACITY BUILDING AT THE GRASS-ROOTS LEVEL: a perspective from the developing world

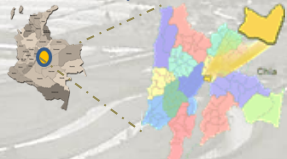
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Upper-Middle Income country  
47.8 million people (75 % Urban)  
43.1 people/km2  
GDP per capita: US \$ 7903.9  
Poverty: 27.8 %

Colombia (South America) is vulnerable to natural and man-made disasters. The municipality of Chía reflects the country's context:

- **Natural hazards:** seismic risk, flooding, landslides, bushfires, meteorological
- **Technological:** accidents, crime-related scenarios, miscellaneous
- **Vulnerabilities:** rapid demographic growth, high population density, environmental damage
- **Limited capacity:** Largely volunteer-based, limited training and resources, mainly focus on Response



CHIA:  
Population: 126'647  
Urban: 78.4 %  
3.7 people/household

Wide spread flooding in 2010 /11 associated to "La Niña" phenomenon, highlighted need for improved disaster risk management (DRM)

- 3350 people affected by flooding
- 7 % of the total area affected
- Major disruptions on transportation
- Estimated 20 % reduction in economic activities



## COMMUNITY-BASED DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT (CBDRM)

is the process of engaging communities at risk in reducing their vulnerabilities and enhancing their capacities by participating in decision-making and the implementation of DRM:

Identification - Analysis - Management - Monitoring

### ESTRATEGY

**Community at risk:** Chía

**Partner:** Chía Volunteer Fire-fighting Service (CBVC)

**Endorsement:** Local Government  
National Unit for DRM  
National Firefighting Board

**International** Gift Abroad QLD

**Cooperation:** University of Queensland



- To improve local DRM by enhancing the capacity of the Volunteer Fire-fighting Service (C.B.V.C.), an organization with a community nature, local recognition and influence on decision-making and DRM.
- To empower the firefighters to lead and work with the community
- To enhance their participation on decision-making, planning and implementation

## OUTCOMES

- Modernized Corporate image, organizational website, social media strategy
- National and municipal acknowledgement: Awarded on their 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- Widen scope of action: gained additional budget specifically allocated for CBDRM
- Improved technical capacity: ambulance service was equipped and certified



**QUALITATIVE RISK ASSESSMENT:** exploratory cross sectional survey

- 35% of the population had been affected by an emergency or disaster
- 36.4% referred having received information on how to prepare for these events
- 70-80 % of the population believes level of preparation of local institutional is low
- 60-85% population have not done or considered doing preparedness actions
- About 75 % of people will wait until there is a specific warning or event to actually prepare.
- The most common reported hazards were crime related events, flooding and road traffic incidents.

## CONCLUSION

CBDRM builds capacity at the grass-roots level in a context-sensitive, socially constructive, cost-effective and sustainable manner. Developing disaster resilience involves learning about the community itself, how to connect with it, how to optimize the resources available.

International support on DRM in resource constrained contexts should consider moving away from the cost-inefficient major focus on response and rehabilitation efforts.