

Introduction

ProVention is organizing a “charrette” workshop on urban risk that will take place on April 8th and 9th during the ProVention Forum.

Charrettes are a tool used in the design and planning fields in which a group of “designers” drafts a solution to a design problem. For this charrette, the set of ProVention partners attending the ProVention Forum will focus on effective urban risk reduction as the “design problem”. For more background on charrettes see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charrette>.

There are two key goals. The first is to tie together field visits and group reflection on potential risk reduction solutions in order to take advantage of all of the experience and insight we will have among the Forum participants, a number of whom are coming from cities and municipalities in the region. The second goal is to strengthen the connection between the international participants at the Forum and local practitioners who have also been invited to participate in the workshop.

Objectives

- ♦ To explore – through both field visits and case studies – examples of disaster risk problems in urban areas and related risk management activities.
- ♦ To identify common risk issues in urban areas and impediments to effective risk reduction, especially those that would benefit from a cooperative effort in the region or internationally.
- ♦ To identify opportunities for collaboration to address these common risk issues, especially through existing networks of organizations and individuals that are ready to collaborate in (such as the UN/ISDR-led Urban Risk Thematic Platform in the Americas, regional governmental organizations, and various Red Cross networks).

Expected outcomes

- ♦ A better understanding of the disaster risk issues in urban areas of the Latin America and Caribbean region.
- ♦ Priority list of key impediments to urban risk reduction that would benefit from regional or international collaboration.
- ♦ An outline of potential solutions to explore in further collaboration.

Participants

The participants will include members of the ProVention Forum taking place in Panamá 8-10 April 2008 as well as partners from the local government and civil society organizations who will be invited to participate in the charrette.

The Forum participants will represent a mix of ProVention partners coming from throughout Latin America and also from other places in the world and also a mix of different stakeholder groups including cities, NGOs, national governments, donor organisations, international financial institutions, academics, and the private sector.

Methodology

The charrette will be structured as two half-day sessions.

Part 1 : Field visits and case studies

The first session will take place the afternoon of Tuesday, April 8th. This session will be focused a series of parallel field visits and case study presentations. The focus in

this first session will be in exploring different aspects of urban risk and identifying primary causes and compounding factors.

While Panamá is often thought to be less exposed to natural hazards than many cities in Latin America and the Caribbean, there still exist a range of risk issues that often receive comparatively little attention. Typical hazards include floods, fires, and landslides, and even earthquakes infrequently in the past. In addition many issues of urban vulnerability that threaten communities elsewhere in the world, constituting a range of “daily disasters”, are also prevalent in Panamá City. These include rapid urbanization, exclusion, informal settlement, strain on infrastructure and services, etc.

Part 2 : Analysis and solutions

The second session will take place the following morning on Wednesday, April 9th. This session will focus on group work in small teams to explore in more detail the risk issues identified the day before.

The goal is to brainstorm solutions to these risk issues. In terms of solutions, often what needs to happen is already known; the real challenges are in answering the question of how to get there. The discussion in this second session will look at impediments to effective risk reduction and how to remove or diminish them. At the end the small groups will prioritize those issues and approaches that can more effectively be addressed through cooperative effort in the region or internationally.

The charrette is organized around three themes which are outlined below. These themes will guide both the field visits / case studies and the analysis and solutions discussions the next day:

A. Informal Settlement

Field visits – afternoon, April 8th

1 Loma Coba / Las Nubes

This visit will be to Las Nubes, an informal settlement on the outskirts of Panama City, where the Red Cross has recently conducted Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments. While located primarily on hillside slopes, houses here are less exposed to landslide risk as plot sizes have been standardized by local leaders. Several of the communities in this area are primarily populated by indigenous people from elsewhere in Panama.

2 San Miguelito

San Miguelito is an area that mixes both new informal settlements and areas where existing settlement has been regularized. New settlement increasingly pushes outward and into marginal lands along slopes or on easements for power lines or other infrastructure. San Miguelito is also home to the “Beehive” housing development that was a failed attempt to promote higher density housing.

3 Curundu

Curundu is an area near the Albrooke airfield that is exposed to both fire and flooding hazards but also much more regularly to urban violence. Here in the middle of March 2007 40 houses were burned as part of a suspected arson attack. The visit will include a meeting with local leaders to look at the overlap between human security and disaster risk resilience.

Key issues for discussion – morning, April 9th

- ♦ Services
- ♦ Layout vs. self-build
- ♦ Risk information

B. Urban Growth

Field visits – afternoon, April 8th

4 Paitilla / Punta Pacifica

This visit will explore issues of rapid, high-rise urban growth. Punta Pacifica has been built up along the site of an old airport with little planning for the tall buildings and high density that now exist in the area. Many of the buildings in this area exceed the height that the local fire services can reach and the curving roads are not designed for the heavy traffic or for quick egress in an emergency.

5 Chorrillo / Santa Ana

Chorrillo is adjacent to the historic downtown of Panama City and is one of the few areas in the city with low-income multi-story housing. With many of the original houses having been built from wood, so fires have been a consistent threat and there are several areas where vacant lots show the location of past fires.

6 Instituto Americas school in Betania

This site visit will be to a school where the Panamanian Red Cross has engaged with students on disaster risk reduction education. The visit will provide a chance to see some of the school activities on risk reduction and talk with the students about what impact this initiative is having on their own activities to reduce risks in their homes and neighbourhoods.

Case discussions (at El Panama Hotel) – afternoon, April 8th

7 Meeting with DRR National Platform hosted by SINAPROC

This visit will offer a chance to meet with the National Civil Protection System, other members of the National Platform for DRR, and the Ministry of Housing to discuss recent developments in Panama with a new urban law and establishment of National Platform for DRR. This session will provide a chance to learn how urban risk is being address in these initiatives and discuss with the National Platform and Ministry of housing relevant experience elsewhere.

8 Istanbul (urban risk indicators) (to be confirmed)

The Earthquake Megacities Initiative (EMI) is working with the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality to develop a set of urban risk indicators. These indicators will be used both as a risk communication tool and to track progress in improving the planning and operational functions of the Municipality related to disaster management in Istanbul, include the provision of services through Municipality-managed enterprise such as the Water Company, Gas Company and Transportation Company. Fouad Bendimerad from EMI will present this work and then open the session for discussion on maximizing the relevance and feasibility of such indicators.

Key issues for discussion – morning, April 9th

- ♦ Legal framework
- ♦ Decentralization / capacity building
- ♦ Codes / standards vs. property rights

C. Environment / Climate Risk

Field visits – afternoon, April 8th

9 Meeting with National Environmental Authority to discuss GEO Cities analysis
(to be confirmed)

The UN Environmental Program together with the National Environmental Authority (ANAM) in Panama has recently completed an integrated environmental assessment for Panama City. So far this process has not looked explicitly at urban disaster risk, but this session will provide an opportunity to discuss with ANAM implications from the current study for disaster risk reduction.

Case discussions (at El Panama Hotel) – afternoon, April 8th

10 Montevideo Metropolitan Area (extreme events and sea level rise)

Gustavo Nagy will present a case study on the changing risk of extreme events affecting the metropolitan area of Montevideo. This study will also look at the laws, programs and projects on integrated coastal management, climate change, biodiversity protection and land use planning that are promoting public awareness, adaptation and risk management plans that will reduce vulnerability to climate risks and impacts all along the Uruguayan coast.

11 Peru (glacial melt) (to be confirmed)

Juan Carlos Montero from GTZ in Peru has been invited to present a case study on the impacts on urban areas of glacial melt in the Andes which is both increasing runoff and the potential for flooding and also threatens longer-term water shortage. The case study will also look at how urban areas in Peru are beginning to address these challenges.

Key issues for discussion – morning, April 9th

- ♦ Relevant local modelling of potential impacts
- ♦ Risk financing strategies

Schedule

Tuesday, April 8th afternoon:

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| 13:30 – 14:00 | Introduction to the charrette, Plenary meeting |
| 14:00 – 18:00 | Field visits to various sites or case study presentations at hotel |

Wednesday, April 9th morning:

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| 08:30 – 08:45 | Introduction to 2 nd day of the charrette, Plenary meeting |
| 08:45 – 09:15 | Highlights from field visits and case study presentations |
| 09:15 – 11:00 | Feedback discussions from field visits and case study presentations to prioritise key challenges and group work to develop potential solutions |
| 11:00 – 11:45 | Presentations by groups on three themes |
| 11:45 – 12:15 | Feedback from local government and community leaders |
| 12:15 – 12:30 | Conclusions |