

ADMD BULLETIN #24

The Dominican Disaster Mitigation Association (ADMD) invites you to visit our Home Page: <http://www.oas.org/en/cdmp/rdom/Homepag.htm> facilitated by the CDMP under the auspices of OAS/USAID. **Please contact us at m.desastre@codetel.net.do if you would like to be included in the e-mail mailing list.**

The Asociación Dominicana de Mitigación de Desastres (ADMD) is a Private Voluntary Non-profit Organization (PVO), originally established by the Caribbean Disaster Mitigation Project (CDMP), financed by USAID through its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and implemented in eleven Caribbean nations by the Organization of American States (OAS). This NGO, comprised of Dominican private and NGO (Non Governmental Organization) sector representatives began in 1993 as a project implementation and supervisory committee, and in 1995, became legally established to ensure the mid and long term continuation of the CDMP's vulnerability reduction activities.

The ADMD's Board of Directors includes representatives of five NGO's (Arq. Luis Sena, Food for the Hungry; Ing. Carlos Pimentel, Esperanza International; Ing. Héctor O'Reilly, SODOSISMICA; Mr. Henry Pimentel, World Vision International; and Mrs. Dircia Paulino, Haina Business and Industry Association), and representatives from five companies (Ing. José Almonte, Codetel; Ing. Evelio Martínez, SEGNA; Mrs. Marina Alvarez, Alvarez Surun & Asoc.'s; Lic. Rafael Marrancini, Johnson & Johnson; and Ms. Pilar Domínguez, Grupo M). In addition, the Civil Defense, Dominican Red Cross, and the Armed Forces participate, without the right to vote, on the ADMD's Board of Directors. The ADMD maintains a strong working relationship with many of the National Emergency Commission's (NEC) member organizations and collaborating institutions.

The ADMD's office is equipped and organized to permit efficient and effective access to project-related information, materials, and activities focusing on five areas: Information, Coordination and Communication, Training, Community Education and Community Initiatives. The activities are carried out by staff and board members as well as through representatives of over 30 Dominican NGO's. The ADMD has effective working relationships with government institutions and authorities and with international agencies working with the disaster sector. The ADMD has implemented over US\$800,000 in projects financed by various national and international institutions such as USAID, IRG, FEMA, HUD/CII-VIVIENDAS, OFDA, DIPECHO, and Plan International.

We cordially send you the current **Informative Bulletin**, No. 24, as of December 31, which summarizes the ADMD's activities and achievements since its inception in five main strategic objectives:

I Information:

The ADMD gathers and disseminates critical information regarding all of the country's natural hazards as well as effective mitigative measures. This includes an active awareness campaign giving presentations to schools, businesses, communities and organizations. The ADMD has given 659 presentations to 36,557 people nation wide, 220 of them were for 19,500 teachers, students and parents as part of the school campaign. In addition 13 workshops have been given so that 594 teachers can orient their students. At least 71,620 brochures regarding what to do before, during and after hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes have been published and distributed throughout high-risk communities, including over 11,620 posters, stickers and signs. The ADMD has produced 23 bulletins which were sent every three months by fax/modem to almost 2,000 offices and organizations and are currently mailed electronically worldwide to over 2,600 agencies and colleagues twice a year. In addition, the ADMD receives generous support from the media and has received over 5,650 minutes of tv time; 8,622 minutes of radio time and over 45 newspaper articles representing a donation of at least US\$3,646,557. The ADMD has published two articles in technical publications in the United States and in the Dominican Republic. Recently, the ADMD was cited as a model NGO in an article published by Dr. Mark Pelling in England. Additionally, the ADMD was highlighted in September of 2002, for its community work in a report by the World Bank on the Catastrophic Insurance Market in the Caribbean Region. For two years, the ADMD also had the opportunity to produce a weekly, hour-long radio program – thanks to Dr. Romero Ventura, to promote disaster awareness and mitigation. Several other programs and stations offered regular spots on existing programs in support of our work.

II Disaster Management Training for Professionals and Technicians:

The ADMD has given over 23 courses in which at least 530 representatives of businesses and NGO's have gained skills in various topics related to Disaster Management. Agencies and institutions such as the UNDP Disaster Mitigation Project through the Ministry of Public Works, PAHO, and Red Cross have contributed to the training effort, yet OFDA, CDMP, and the ADMD have made Disaster Management training in the D.R. possible. Topics range from Disaster Administration to Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis to Contingency Plans to Emergency Brigades and Hurricane Simulations.

III Coordination and Communication:

The ADMD provides the mechanism through which information can be gathered from and distributed among communities, organizations and agencies to facilitate information regarding risks, hazards, mitigation, preparedness and response needs and efforts. The ADMD coordinates with and works through approximately 200 national and regional NGO's and local community groups as well as with private sector companies. This permits each sector to develop a better understanding for risks and limitations and coordinate existing resources and capacities.

IV Community Education:

In 1995, the ADMD evaluated and selected a program designed by the Red Cross called "Es Mejor Prevenir..." and has, to date, sponsored and/or facilitated 20 courses to train 619 local facilitators from over 50 NGO's as well as from the Civil Defense and the Red Cross. Since October of 1995, 874 high risk communities have received the Community Disaster Preparedness Workshop. Over 24,628 community leaders have learned what a disaster is, how to identify vulnerability, how to identify the community's human and material resources, and - as a community - how to design a Community Emergency Plan. Thanks to the project sponsored by OFDA, the ADMD was able to emphasize the importance of testing community emergency plans and held two sets of simulations in 15 communities, using a hurricane scenario, to allow the Community Emergency Committees to test and make corrections to their plans, thus improving their capacity to implement their plans. To date, the ADMD has facilitated 38 hurricane simulations, including several for important hotel chains, involving over 1,195 people.

The results of this intervention are quite tangible. There is a marked interest and motivation in disaster mitigation. Many communities have established a disaster mitigation committee and also re-established or initiated Red Cross and Civil Defense chapters - having realized that they will have to face a disaster alone at least initially. A number of communities also established women's associations and neighborhood associations as a direct result. Also the communities have pooled resources and efforts to carry out projects to reduce identified vulnerabilities such as the construction of speed-bumps on the highway near a school. Other projects include the improvement of drainage systems, construction of roads to previously inaccessible communities, stabilization of slope embankments and containment wall construction to stave off erosion and flooding, among others. The communities have been quite frank in admitting that they would not have embarked on such projects had it not been for the ADMD sponsored workshop. As a result, they have learned how to organize the community, establish a goal, and accomplish it. In some communities the local government has decided to provide construction workers and other assistance to support these community initiatives.

V Community Initiatives:

The ADMD's facilitation of Community Initiatives to implement vulnerability reduction projects has benefited over 137,139 people in 130 communities throughout the Dominican Republic, from Miches to Elías Piña and most of the peripheral area surrounding Santo Domingo (see enclosed listing of 55 small infrastructure projects built).

The NGO's on the ADMD's Board of Directors were consulted for the design phase of the program. Communities that have received the Community Disaster Preparedness Workshop receive orientation regarding the C.I. program and the application process. Communities must provide local counterpart contributions - such as manual labor, technical assistance, land, project permits, etc.- worth at least 50% of the total value of

the project. In our experience, however, the communities have contributed at least 65% of the total value of the projects, mostly designed to prevent flooding and contamination as well as to reduce landslides.

An important part of the ADMD's disaster mitigation work has been the structuring, training and equipping of the Community Emergency Committees and the construction of small infrastructure projects such as the embankment of drainage ditches; the installation of survey poles as part of a flood early warning system for communities alongside rivers; the marking of evacuation routes, shelters, hazardous areas and meeting areas. In addition, river beds have been channeled to reduce flooding and foot bridges have been built to facilitate evacuation in case of flooding. Other projects have included the drilling of drainage wells, housing improvement and the retrofit of community structures to make them more resistant to strong winds and to have them serve as shelters and/or warehouses in the event of a disaster. Our methodology requires that the community take an active part in each project which is why the resulting value is generally much higher than that invested by the ADMD. To date, a total of RD\$10,818,520.53 has been invested in Community Initiatives (the rate of exchange has varied from RD\$12.5 per US\$1 to RD\$18.7 per US\$1 during these past eight years), of which RD\$2,996,441.70 represent the contributions of the beneficiary communities (manual labor etc.), RD\$737,841.74 from local authorities (heavy equipment and work brigades); RD\$934,282.15 from intermediary NGO's (technical assistance, materials, and funds to purchase goods and services related to the construction project), and RD\$6,160,204.94 on behalf of the ADMD and its donors to facilitate the projects (covering mainly materials purchase and transportation). Regarding FEMA's Project Impact activities in Haina, the investment in small infrastructure projects complemented efforts by local authorities worth almost RD\$12,000,000 to repair the Avenida de la Refinería which formed part of the hazardous materials transportation route designated for the area.

VI Consulting (this sixth line of work has developed due to the lessons learned during project implementation):

The ADMD has conducted a Vulnerability Analysis for the Interamerican Foundation's Project Portfolio in the Dominican Republic. We have also collaborated with the OAS for the Analysis of Best Practices regarding Risk Identification, Reduction, and Transfer. We continue to advise businesses and school regarding the development and implementation of Contingency Plans. If your organization still has not established the necessary procedures in order to guarantee business continuity in the event of a disaster, the ADMD invites you to contact our office to coordinate a meeting to assess your needs in this regard. Please call (809) 508-2596 and/or 533-8024. The e-mail address is m.desastre@codetel.net.do for your convenience.