



The interview model and interview matrix for this project were made by the team. Project photos were taken by the team.

This Project is the offshoot of the team's participation in the community preparation program for risk management which took place from 2000 to 2002 in marginal urban areas throughout Venezuela, and more specifically within the framework of the Project begun in 2000 with Mercy Corps International, which was subsequently continued, in 2002, with the support of the Corporation for the Recovery and Development of Vargas State (CORPOVARGAS), as well as with the Fire Fighters and the Civil Protection Institute for Vargas State.

From our knowledge of the region and revision of available documentation our conclusion is that in Vargas State as well as in the rest of the country risk management has been limited to attending to "unforeseen" emergencies and disasters, without the adequate use of tools to enable the development of local risk management policies, or that emphasize prevention, mitigation, preparation and alert regarding probable adverse events of a natural man-made origin. On the other hand, the risk handling models that have been implemented to date by specialized organizations lack familiarity with the local culture and history (cultural experience of risk) and with local response systems to adverse events that could be used to confront this type of event.

All the preceding has made it difficult to approach and establish an efficient relationship among the First Response Organizations (OPRs) and affected communities, whose knowledge and experience have

been underestimated and underrated. Consequently, we consider it necessary to work to increase integration among the communities and organizations responsible for preparing the community to handle risks, in order to generate effective disaster prevention and mitigation strategies; participation that not only includes their coordination with respect to response strategies, but, perhaps, will influence the contents or certain programs and data sources.

The SIG is a practical tool for integrating this knowledge which will allow OPRs to analyze and easily present information on maps that is necessary for greater integration of scientific know-how and local knowledge, to thus achieve effective risk management whether by rescuing useful knowledge or providing data of interest to help understand and perhaps predict behavior in the community.

### Goal

It is for the preceding reasons that the aim of this study was to compile, in the Geographic Information System (hereinafter SIG), the specialized technical know-how along with the wealth of local knowledge that exists among the inhabitants of Naiquatá, in order to establish two-way communications among the actors on both ends of Risk management (Experts – Community) so as to generate more efficient strategies and practices to prevent and reduce disasters.

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Town Naiquatá before the torrential flow of 1999



Town Naiquatá after the torrential flow of 1999

## Geographic location

In the original version of the Project presented to Provention Consortium the idea was to work exclusively with the Barrio San Antonio in Naiguatá, Vargas State, Venezuela.

However, in subsequent meetings with the fire fighters from the Naiguatá station the idea was born to expand geographic coverage to Naiguatá, because of the increased usefulness of SIG in their everyday work and in community preparation in the area. This recommendation seemed reasonable to us because the Barrio San Antonio is functionally and culturally integrated with the rest of the town of Naiguatá, so that any information used will also be applied to this sector as well as to other aspects. For example, with respect to the complex issue of risk management, the inhabitants of this "barrio" have a shared risk experience with that of the town.

Naiguata parish it is appraised that the zones of the coast constituted in his majority by cones of dejection and accumulated materials recently, what it makes prone to has a long history of disasters generated by diverse natural phenomena, and in December 1999 it was affected in an unequal manner, being among the sectors that suffered the most severe consequences (mudslides and floods in those areas closes to river banks), while others were almost unaffected. The project is interested in evaluating such dissimilar occurrences in space. On the other hand, we presume that there may be inter-sector diversity in one and the same community with respect to oral tradition regarding the issue of risk and disasters, differences that could eventually be translated into different ways of confronting such contingencies, a vital topic for OPRs.



**Bolivarian School after the 1999 torrential flow**

## Beneficed population

There are five (5) direct participants who are members of First Response Organizations (OPR):

- Two (2 ) from the Naiquatá Fire Fighters.
- Two (2) from the Community Preparation Unit for Vargas State.
- One (1) from Naiguatá Civil Protection.

This group of fire fighters was selected because of its interest in the project and because, since 2000, it has participated in a series of workshop within the framework of the Corpovargas project carried out by SOCSAL on community preparedness and risk management. The understanding is that these persons will then act as "multiplying agents" where they work, as well as among other entities and interested parties.

According to the National Census carried out in 1990 by the National Institute of Statistics (Spanish acronym INE), there are 9446 habitants in the town of Naiguatá, which would be the indirect participating population.

## Theoretical-methodological framework

The project's theoretical-methodological framework was adapted for which we basically used certain works with an ethno-methodological approach and, above all, two working documents generated for SOCSAL by the anthropologist, Carmen Luisa Ferris, titled "Culture and risk: common sense knowledge of risk in daily life. The Naiguatá Case," and "[Abstract] SOCSAL-PROVENTION CONSORTIUM Naiguatá Study".



**House affected by the 1999 torrential flow**