

A Multi-Faceted Approach to Risk Reduction Using Public Education in the Eastern Caribbean

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Abstract

The University of the West Indies Seismic Research Centre (UWI-SRC) monitors volcanic and seismic activity in the English-speaking Eastern Caribbean and has been involved in raising awareness of these geologic hazards since its establishment. Formally created in 2001, the Centre's education and outreach arm bridges the scientific monitoring of the region's geological hazards and public appreciation of these hazards. This poster describes the marriage of science and active risk reduction that is the UWI-SRC's outreach programme. The primary goal is to increase public knowledge and awareness of geo-hazards, which tend to be low frequency/high impact events. An improved understanding of the processes driving geologic events should reduce unwarranted fear, increase personal safety and build the capacity to reduce risk. The programme also encourages civil action by educating policy makers and private stakeholders on the risk attributed to these hazards, with the hope that more effective mitigation measures will be implemented on a national and regional scale. The promotion of the study of the geosciences among school aged youth is actively encouraged within the programme as a way to systematically build capacity with the Caribbean. The Centre has developed products including: pamphlets, posters, teaching aid suites, training workshops, awareness campaigns and an internship programme. These products fall into two broad categories: (a) training and awareness, and (b) media. The reach of this effort has extended beyond social and territorial borders to impact many persons at different levels throughout Eastern Caribbean society. By employing a multi-faceted method to educating the general public in personal safety, promoting the study of geoscience and engaging civil authorities with the education and outreach programme, the UWI Seismic Research Centre has sought to tangibly reduce the Caribbean's vulnerability to its geologic hazards.