

Latin America and Caribbean

ARGENTINA

PARTICIPATORY ACTIONS FOR RISK REDUCTION IN CEIBOS COMMUNITY

Habitat for Humanity shares their recipe for successful DRR through technical skills development and participation.

KEY INGREDIENTS



SUSTAINABILITY



Permanence

- Instil behaviour change to counteract negative actions and to promote a community of active agents of resilience



Effectiveness

- Develop participatory risk maps of the community that detail local realities from the perspective of the local people



INSTITUTIONALISATION



Capacities

- Encourage sharing of capacities and best practices between communities
- Hold trainings for community leaders on the process of managing DRM projects (including capacities to access international/external sources of funding for CBDRM)



Culture

- Sensitize local political leaders to the priorities of communities through visits and impacting perception data
- Promote a culture of including marginalised groups in disaster risk governance by establishing mechanisms where marginalised groups are adequately included budgeting around CBDRM

Training is the essential element that forms this dish, which coupled with multi-stakeholder collaboration and engagement with all of society, results in a perfect combination of flood reduction measures at households' level.

This dish comes from the Argentinian district of La Matanza, not far from the country's capital Buenos Aires. Here, Habitat for Humanity supported the community of Los Ceibos in increasing their resilience to floods and storms that batter the area quite often.

After a participatory mapping exercise, which aimed at understanding the social context as well as the physical context in which the community lived, families of the most risk-prone areas got together to develop an action plan that outlined the priority actions to take.

Road and electricity systems improvements were the two top priorities, which Habitat for Humanity supported implementing. Commissioning a company to do the job needed would have been quicker and easier but it would not have assured the long-term sustainability of the project. What was decided instead, was that community members would be trained on basic housing

improvements related to electricity, and on road maintenance: trainings were organised for households, for community leaders on flood risk awareness, for builders and electricity workers on resilient electric systems, and for volunteers.

The local authorities were brought on board by showing the results of the participatory mapping exercise which highlighted the areas where action was most needed, exercise which at the same time ensured full ownership and participation of the community, thanks to their early engagement in risk mapping and action planning.

This resulted not only in an improvement in the long-term sustainability of the project, but it also shaped the community culture and the spirit of solidarity: more and more families became interested and wanted to be involved in the activities, even those households who lived in non-risky areas.



Photo credit: Habitat para la Humanidad Argentina