

FINAL REPORT

PILOT PROJECT DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL STRATEGY AND PLAN OF ACTION FOR DISASTER RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY IN CURAÇAO'S CULTURE SECTOR.

WILLEMSTAD, CURAÇAO

Report prepared by national consultant Richenel Ansano
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Project

UNESCO and the Curaçao National Commission for UNESCO have signed a Service Contract to support initiatives to build Resilience of Caribbean SIDS to Disasters and Climate Change through Enhancing the Culture Sector's Disaster Preparedness for Effective Response.

A series of activities have been planned to engage the Culture sector in the elaboration of meaningful strategies which will assist the sector in becoming more resilient. The strategies are meant to be developed and undertaken with the context of a broad base of consultations and in partnership with the relevant national disaster management agency, as well as within a multi-stakeholder process.

Required activities

1. A series of consultations with culture stakeholders to discuss the adaptation of the Guidelines for the Development of a National Strategy and Plan of Action for Disaster Resilience and Recovery in the Caribbean's Culture Sector at the national level through the development of key actions for each component of the culture sector for each phase of the disaster management cycle (Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, Recovery).
2. A series of consultations between disaster management and culture stakeholders to identify ways in which workflows for risk reduction, emergency preparedness and response for the Culture Sector can be incorporated within the national/local disaster risk reduction and emergency management.
3. A Workshop to which brings together culture and disaster actors to provide training on the following: Overview of disasters impacting country; Overview of the national Culture Sector; Existing inventories of culture institutions, heritage sites and assets, etc; Vulnerabilities of the Culture Sector and how disaster impacts it, present disaster management strategies being used by the Culture Sector; Disaster planning at the national level; Opportunities for integration of sectors and future collaboration; How disaster management planning can better assist Culture Sector to better mitigate and manage disasters; Post Disaster Needs Assessment process.
4. One practical exercise which utilizes the Guidelines for developing national strategic objectives and key actions focusing on one component of the culture sector, and promote it as a case study focusing on the process, successes, and challenges.
5. Collecting existing data and inventories related to Culture Sector administration and institutions, civil society organizations, moveable, immoveable and intangible heritage, etc. to establish the pre-disaster baseline data on the Culture Sector to be assessable by the relevant national disaster management actors.
6. Raising awareness of relevant Ministers responsible for culture and disaster management, as well as public institutions, civil society and culture experts on the importance of the integration of culture and disaster management at the national level.

Course of action

The cultural sector was contacted and participated in consultations and a practical exercise. Members of the Emergency Authority also participated actively in one consultations. It proved difficult to set up a subsequent meeting with the Emergency Authority, probably due to the extent of work they had on their hands during the COVID pandemic and ongoing Venezuelan refugee crisis. Facts that emerged during the project pointed to past initiatives that actually called for a different approach to the Emergency Authority. Blue Shield Curaçao had already approached the Authority in the past. Further work on Culture and DRR need to build on those initial contacts, rather than repeat steps that have already been made.

First consultation

The first consultation was with culture stakeholders to discuss the adaptation of the Guidelines for the Development of a National Strategy and Plan of Action for Disaster Resilience and Recovery in the Caribbean's

Culture Sector at the national level through the development of key actions for each component of the culture sector for each phase of the disaster management cycle (Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, Recovery). Within this a first encounter was held to first familiarize stakeholders with the relationships between emergencies, culture and the SDGs, and to find common ground and divergences in the approaches to culture. The participants included memory institutions, GOs and companies involved in infrastructure management, utilities and development issues and an NGO whose area of work is nature and development.

For this consultation it was opted to spend time to explore and share knowledge among actors in the sector regarding emergencies. Adaptation of the CDEMA Guidelines will occur in a follow up consultation due to the fact that participants needed more exposure to the framework of DRR. Although this was expected before the workshop it was especially confirmed with the exercises and discussions on what should be considered disasters and what knowledge there already exists within the cultural sector on risk management. Participants were especially interested in delineating a risk environment brought about by political, economic and cultural factors.

PROGRAM

07.30 – 07.45	Arrival and registration	
08.00 – 08.05	Welcome and opening	Marva Browne, Secretary General of the NATCOM
08.05 – 08.10	Address by the Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sports	Minister
08.10 – 08.25	Introduction to the project and goals for the day	Richenel Ansano, Project Coordinator
08.25 – 08.40	Emergencies and Risk Reduction	Albert Martis, Director Meteorological Service
08.40 – 09.20	Exercise on emergencies and culture domains	Richenel Ansano
09.20 – 09.35	Break	
09.35 – 10.25	Brainstorming/Working groups	Richenel Ansano
10.25– 10.40	Break	
10.40 – 11.25	Plenary presentations	Working Groups
11.25 – 11.30	Signing up members for the Climate change Working group on Culture	Richenel Ansano
11.30– 12.00	Conclusions and next steps	Richenel Ansano

RESULTS OF FIRST CONSULTATION

Participants arrived at the following landscape of themes and relationships considered relevant. Participants were not tasked with trying for a comprehensive listing, but to be guided by their own work and experience of culture and extrapolate to what seems relevant for the wider community. The gathering produced a tentative list of

- cultural domains/areas of importance;
- most relevant types of emergencies that affect these domains/areas, and
- how culture is affected in emergencies.

These were inventoried as per the following table:

Cultural domains/areas of importance	Most relevant types of emergencies	How is culture affected?
Historic sites	Rain	Inaccessibility of sites, inaccessibility of the World Heritage site/city
Monuments	Pandemic	Cannot use facilities

Museums	Flooding	Work disruption
Public art	Southwester storms, fires	Art is destroyed
Music	Tornadoes	Music instruments cannot be made, are lost
ICH sites	Fires	Harvest loss, loss of wells, windmills
All domains	Social disturbances	Disruption of practice and transmission; potential death of practitioners and destruction of cultural properties
Manufacture and use of musical instruments		Inaccessibility of materials
Harvest festival		The collective work around the festival, including the social cohesion it brings. These social relations have especially been affected by the COVID pandemic
Technological developments		Missed opportunities of transmission: transmission of culture from younger to older generations, and between younger generations
Cultural transmission through site visits, conventional and social media	Social disturbances	Disruption of transmission; counterfactual transmission
Wilderness areas and cultivated land	Fires, heavy rainfall	Destruction of cultural spaces, and resources
Traditional water reservoirs	Heavy rainfall, inundations, drought	Lack of irrigation water, lack of agricultural products[due to broken dams; exacerbated by unmanaged drainage systems and other aspects of water management]
transportation	Heavy rainfall	Interruption of services
sports	Heavy rainfall, hurricane related rains	Sport fields disappear
Potable water	Tsunamis, hurricanes	Lowering of water reserves, damaging water production plant; affects all kinds of things in the culture sector [exacerbated by water management system that is too dependent on water desalination – with few cisterns, wells, and traditional dams/reservoirs on the island and a policy of draining rainwater to the sea instead of catchment and filtration in the Earth]

Mindset, policy and technological issues:

- Cisterns were systematically discouraged and/or eliminated because they supposedly promote mosquito breeding, although this is not true. Construction regulations do not permit cisterns.
- There might not be any real regulations, just mindset that prevents constructing cisterns

- the Water plant might not be interested in water conservation as it cuts into their production and requires a constant supply capacity for when those reserves are affected and hence increases expenses
- privatization of public resources means lack of access for many; how can we provide DRR for public cultural resources that are in private hands and thus inaccessible to a larger public (e.g. traditional medicinal plants, places of memory, water catchment areas)

Second consultation

A second consultation was held with culture stakeholders to discuss the adaptation of the Guidelines for the Development of a National Strategy and Plan of Action for Disaster Resilience and Recovery in the Caribbean's Culture Sector at the national level through the development of key actions for each component of the culture sector for each phase of the disaster management cycle (Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, Recovery). This consultation was done virtually due to the fact that cases of COVID increased exponentially during this period and citizens were encouraged to avoid physical social interactions.

The agenda for the consultation was as follows:

PROGRAM

09.00 – 09.10	Connection to zoom platform	
09.10 – 09.15	Welcome and opening words	Richenel Ansano, Project Coordinator
09.15 – 09.25	Introduction to the project	Richenel Ansano, Project Coordinator
09.25 – 09.40	Emergencies and Risk Reduction	Albert Martis, Director Meteorological Services
09.40 – 10.20	Emergencies and Intangible Heritage	Richenel Ansano
10.20 – 10.40	Brainstorming with the participants	Richenel Ansano
10.40– 11.00	Summary and next steps	Richenel Ansano

RESULTS OF SECOND CONSULTATION

Mindset and perspective

The importance of climate change in propelling emergencies

Participants indicated that there is a need to look at the long term effects of climate change and how this relates to emergencies. The notion of slow emergencies became important: cumulative effects of climate change that already have noticeable (and sometimes great) impact on social and ecological systems, but will become catastrophic with time. The example of many big trees of several traditional species being destroyed by heat in the past few years. More frequent inundations were also seen as alarming.

Combining tradition and new strategies

Several examples were given to indicate that solutions to emergencies should combine traditional and modern practices, techniques, and understandings. The example of water conservation techniques in agriculture was offered as a way to focus on drought resistance. Traditional dam construction and terracing should be combined with techniques like boxing, permaculture, and syntropic farming.

Breaking with limiting mindsets

Curaçao being at the edge of the hurricane zone in the Caribbean, it has been directly hit by very few hurricanes over the past centuries. Most currently living persons would not have experienced a hurricane

on the island only the weather systems affected by hurricanes. As such, Curaçaoans have developed a cultural stance that the island and its population are blessed and will not be affected by hurricanes. This has affected awareness about the effects of hurricanes, interest in disaster risk reduction, lack of attention to disasters in urban planning, building construction, and general preparedness. One result is that any severe weather event causes fairly serious avoidable damage. With the trends of climate change this leads to serious consequences.

One other aspect is the recurring annual social impact of emergencies in the region. Recently, with hurricane Irma, Curaçao agreed to take prisoners from Sint Maarten after the prison was heavily damaged. The additional workload, infrastructural adaptations, resource requirements were not minor. Similarly, families temporarily housed with local households or special shelters required personal attention, resources, relocation support. All of these are direct effects of the hurricane season. Other emergency effects stem from Curaçao being used as logistics hub for rescue missions and humanitarian support, during hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, and other regional adverse events. Some of these have particular relationship di ICH, such as foods served to temporary disaster refugees, a social worker from the island being deployed to hurricane affected Dutch Windward island and working with storytelling for children, culturally sensitive medical and psychological services, etc.

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

Participants indicated structural problems, specific bottlenecks, and potential solutions to issues in the field. These were considered to be necessary frameworks to work with and that they should not be lost in more general approaches to dealing with calamities. The main points included:

- Long term drought already destroyed many large trees. Potential future inundations due to climate change are thus quite worrisome. Environmental management plans are urgently needed.
- There are substantial international financial resources that we could access. Our main problems in not having had access to these are a lack of knowledge of these funds and not writing applications. We need to build out capacity in these two areas, especially in grant writing. But that also means capacity building in coordinated social planning.
- A local knowledge center on social needs, resources and capacities would be useful.
- We serve logistical functions for the region, such as through the National Archives (which has a post disaster recovery container for archival resources).
- We need to create a list of ICH to be preserved. This will complement the tangible heritage list.
- Storytelling, podcasting and online education are ways in which transmission of heritage to the younger generations can be guaranteed.

Practical exercise

A practical exercise was organized, to bring together actors from the cultural and disaster management sectors with the intention of identifying potential calamity issues at a multi-functional cultural site that comprises tangible, intangible, and documentary heritage.

PROGRAM

<i>Flex time</i>	Welcome and opening words	Richenel Ansano, Project Coordinator
	Introduction to the project, Curaçao Climate Change Platform, Blue Shield Curaçao	Richenel Ansano, Albert Martis, Miriam Jonker
	Assessment of risks at the museum	Moderated by Richenel Ansano
	Brainstorming with participants on site management for DRR; role of National DRR	Moderated by Richenel Ansano
	Summary and next steps	Richenel Ansano

RISKS ASSESSMENT

Area of museum/practice	Risk	Risk Management issues
Overall	No up to date emergency plan exists.	<p>A plan needs to be drawn up, including risk issues, triage strategies, actors responsible for DRM actions, a database of items to take care of, information for first responders, neighborhood communication plan.</p> <p>Neighborhood connections are useful. The museum has a neighborhood outreach and dialogue strategy. Emergencies will be included in future contact events.</p> <p>The museum itself is a central point in the area and could become a contact point during disasters.</p>
Access roads/outside grounds	<p>Overhead electric cables could fall down on the road causing fire hazard, shock hazard, traffic disruption.</p> <p>Only one well known main access road.</p> <p>Road is easily flooded with heavy rainfall, including mud covering road.</p> <p>Flooding goes through the museum grounds to the back. No adequate drainage exists for heavy rainfall.</p>	<p>Emergency contact info. from utility company needs to be at hand. Neighborhood experts in dealing with electricity need to be known and in database.</p> <p>Side roads need to be mapped for potential risk managers.</p>

	Official road signage not useful for guiding people to the museum. Makeshift signage by the museum is more vulnerable to damage.	The government signage system needs to be updated for the museum.
Museum grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many objects are loose; • open air artwork will be damaged by some events, such as fire, hurricanes; • buildings are low-lying and not drained well; water barriers might be needed at entrance doors; • open air events, and those under separate roof are prone to be disrupted during minor natural events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • objects might need to be fastened; • preservation of open air artwork needs to be attended • elevated thresholds/water barriers might be needed at entrance doors; • certain events would still be possible but need to be moved inside during/after minor natural events
Buildings (especially main building)/constructions	<p>Traditional sorghum stalk roof endangered due to dwindling traditional agriculture, fewer experts, etc. The resilience it brings v/s newer methods is also being lost. The construction methods were also especially useful for dealing with heavy winds.</p> <p>Chicken coop to be evacuated when there are impending emergencies.</p> <p>Some constructions to be dismantled during emergencies and put back together after hazard subsides. One example is the bread oven. The separate door cover needs to be secured elsewhere during emergencies.</p>	This is a good example of ICH as a DRR resource.
Inside/collection	Some artifacts are extremely vulnerable to fire, flooding, hurricane force winds.	An inventory needs to be made and risk assessments done. The results of these ought to be placed in an emergency plan.
Personnel	Personnel is not trained in DRR/DRM.	Personnel needs to be trained as to emergencies, and should be involved in the emergency planning.

GENERAL SCOPE/NEXT STEPS

LIMITING CULTURAL FRAMEWORK

Participants described a limiting cultural framework that impedes DRR work in the culture area. This framework I described as showing: discontinuities of initiatives; fragmentation of knowledge about the culture sector, about emergencies and about DRR resources; lack of transparency and open dialogue. These limitations can, and need to, be overcome for DRR to work in Curaçao.

GENERIC SOLUTIONS

However, some issues mentioned in the first and second consultations were also repeated during this encounter: the need for capacity building for long range, integrated planning; the importance of knowing what local and international resources exist and how to access them; the use of modern communication technologies to reach younger generations as well as a general public.

OVERALL DRR FRAMEWORK AND THE CULTURE SECTOR

The main strategic discussion by the group focused on culture's potential Emergency Support (ESF) Function in DRM. In the past Blue Shield Curaçao already approached the Emergency Authority with the request for incorporating the culture sector in their purview. At that time the Emergency Authority explained that it would require legal changes to the Emergency Law, and that such changes will take time. In the mean time the COVID pandemic brought some changes to these procedures: economy has since received and ESF status in an accelerated procedure. Participants agreed to approach the Emergency Authority again with the petition to give culture an ESF in these new circumstances. This will need to be prepared and will be done in Spring 2022.

For the contact between the Culture Sector and the Emergency Management Sector to work some issue ought to be planned and implemented in 2022:

- the Culture Sector will need to have a concrete plan for functioning as an ESF sector
- the ESF assignment procedure needs to be clear
- the whole sector should be mobilized, including ICH, Built heritage, documentary heritage, culture industries as the sectors that have been identified over the years as the relevant ones; others might be included during exercises to define the sector

APPENDIX

PARTICIPANTS FIRST CONSULTATION

PARTICIPANTS SECOND CONSULTATION

Meyrtha Leetz-Cijntje, Director of Sentro pa Desaroyo di Hende Muhé, center for women and families

Ossandra Lewis-Nieuw, Artist, Educator, Owner of Kas di Arte Kòrsou

Albert Martis, Director of Curaçao Meteorological Services

Dinah Veeris, Herbalist, Owner of Herb Garden Den Paradera

Max Scriwanek, Director of the Curaçao National Archives; President Blue Shield Curaçao

PARTICIPANTS PRACTICAL EXERCISE

Marva Browne, Secretary General Curaçao NATCOM

Manfred Gomez, President of AMAK, the Musicians and Artists Association

Jeanne Henriquez, Curator Kas di Palu di Mainshi Museum, Director Fundashon Museo Tula

Miriam Jonker, Policy Director Ministry of Traffic, Transportation and Urban Planning; Treasurer Blue Shield Curaçao

Ossandra Lewis-Nieuw, Artist, Educator, Owner of Kas di Arte Kòrsou

Michael Newton, Consultant on Tangible Heritage

Lida Pandt, Director of the Curaçao Museums Association; Board Member Blue Shield Curaçaoans

Marwin Ricardo, culturalist, Kachu horn player, coordinator of kachu ensemble of Fundashon Palu di Tamarein