



Homes in the San Diego Bocana Community flooded by heavy rainfall Credit: Plan International

Who are we?

The Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance (ZFRA) is a multi-sectoral partnership focusing on finding practical ways to help communities in developed and developing countries strengthen their resilience to flood risk.

Our definition of resilience:

The ability of a system, community, or society to pursue its social, ecological, and economic development and growth objectives, while managing its disaster risk over time in a mutually reinforcing way.

Vision: Floods have no negative impact on people's and businesses' ability to thrive.

Goal: To increase social, political, and financial investment in community-based flood resilience-building through public, private, and third sector partnerships.



Leaders of the Colima and Santa Bárbara communities in a learning session on setting up and managing temporary shelters Credit: Plan International

Impact of flooding in El Salvador

El Salvador is highly vulnerable to natural hazards. As much as 89 per cent of its territory is at risk of flooding or other natural hazards; and 95 per cent of the population lives in high risk areas. This already extraordinarily high level of vulnerability is increasing even further because of the higher frequency of extreme weather conditions as a result of climate change.

Historically, El Salvador has faced many emergency situations due to tectonic, volcanic, and hydrometeorological activity. Due to their frequent occurrence, earthquakes and floods have caused most losses in terms of lives and material goods.

In El Salvador, many rural communities live in areas prone to flooding. Flooding has also increased in urban communities located along lower river basins.

Accelerated population growth, absence of river drainage systems, and poor infrastructure conditions are some of the root causes of this vulnerability to flooding. In the event of a flood, affected communities are engulfed by streams of water, sand, soil, and collapsed trees. Colossal landslides can be triggered on the slopes of the country's many volcanoes and hills, ruining roads and bridges.

In the event of a flood schools are often used as shelters and remain closed. Children, especially girls, are sometimes required to stay at home to support their families even after schools have re-opened. Their education can be impacted over a prolonged period of time, which puts children under serious distress. Sometimes, children become separated from their families during a flood and may be in need of special protection. Due to these and other factors, children may be especially at risk in natural hazard events.

ZFRA partner working in El Salvador



Plan International (Plan) has been implementing community programmes in

El Salvador for 43 years including in the areas of disaster risk management, resilience, and humanitarian action. Plan is also an implementing partner of the government in disaster risk management and in climate change adaptation and mitigation measures at the local and national level.

Plan is a children's rights organization with key expertise in gender equality. Community development projects with children and adolescents are at the heart of its work. Plan supports the rights of boys and girls from birth until adulthood. Plan supports community members, including women and children, in disaster risk management



Community leaders (members of community response committees) working together to clean up garbage in Colima Credit: Plan International

to prepare them in the event of a flood. Together with local partner organizations, Plan implements several different activities in its intervention communities. These include founding community response committees and training them in first aid and evacuation techniques; developing communal risk response maps; and constructing and signalling evacuation routes. Plan also supports small-scale infrastructure projects so that local assets are better protected in the event of a flood.

ZFRA objectives in El Salvador:

- Enhance flood resilience in communities located along the Pacific Ocean coastline and along rivers exposed to floods.
- Capture learning and best practices in communal flood response measures as potential solutions towards flood resilience.
- Influence resilience policies at the national level, based on the learning generated at the community level, which is shared with stakeholders through a range of different outputs.

The communities we are working with

Many resilience-building actions can be taken at community level as communities often know best how and where they need to build resilience. Working with communities we can demonstrate tangible impact on people's lives and learn from best practices which can help to shape policy at a higher level.

Plan currently implements its resilience project in four communities: San Diego Bocana and El Majahual in the department of La Libertad, Santa Bárbara in the department of Chalatenango, and Colima in the department of Cuscatlán. In these communities Plan works directly with approximately 840 adults, 850 adolescents, and 710 children. These communities were chosen because of their economic vulnerability and their proximity to flood-prone areas. San Diego Bocana and El Majahual are located on the Pacific coast in one of the country's main beach areas and are highly exposed to the threat of tsunamis. Colima and Santa Bárbara are located next to the Cerrón Grande reservoir. After heavy rainfall, the reservoir floods, transporting riverbed sediments to surrounding homes.



Staff from Plan International conducting meeting with community leaders in El Majahual Credit: Plan International

Duration of the El Salvador ZFRA programme: July 2018 – June 2023



Community leader from Colima monitoring the levels of Rio Lempa during heavy rainfall Credit: Plan International

The Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities



Community leaders (members of community response committees) receiving a certificate after completion of their emergency response training Credit: Plan International



The Flood Resilience Measurement for Communities (FRMC) framework comprises two parts: The Alliance's framework for measuring community flood resilience and an associated tool for implementing the framework in practice.

Uses of the FRMC:

- As the first measurement of resilience to be applied on a large scale; fully integrated into community programming
- To help analyse problems before seeking solutions
- To support impact measurement
- To generate data for empirical evidence on flood resilience

The Flood Resilience Portals

The Alliance's Flood Resilience Portals are online spaces for sharing practical knowledge about why and how to build community flood resilience. They bring together the knowledge generated and exchanged through the Zurich Flood Resilience Alliance and beyond.

 www.floodresilience.net
 www.foinundaciones.com
 [@floodalliance](https://twitter.com/floodalliance)



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