

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of East Anglia		
Unit of Assessment: 25 – Area Studies		
Title of case study: Using arts-based approaches to strengthen the resilience of displaced marginalised communities in Colombia		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2016–2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Hazel Marsh	Senior Lecturer in Latin American Studies	2009 to present
Roger Few	Professorial Research Fellow	2002 to present
Teresa Armijos Burneo	Lecturer in International Development	2013 to present
Jenni Barclay	Professor of Volcanology	1999 to present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2017–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>In Colombia, millions of people displaced by violent conflict over the past fifty years face new risks in the areas where they have resettled, such as flooding, landslides and fire. Our team worked alongside resettled people to get their stories, in their own voices and artistic styles, to wider audiences, thereby strengthening awareness of displaced people's experiences, abilities and needs. Our collaborative, arts-based approach to knowledge-exchange built relations of trust with Indigenous and traditionally marginalised groups and helped generate new support networks and community-driven initiatives. The success of this work also influenced government policy, informing the development of inclusive institutional programmes aimed at strengthening local capacity to manage and reduce risk in marginalised settlements.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>Over five decades of armed conflict in Colombia have resulted in one of the world's largest populations of internally displaced people. As of February 2020, the Unit for Attention and Reparation of Victims (UARIV) had recorded almost eight million people internally displaced by violence, 16% of the country's current population (unidadvictimas.gov.co). The 2016 agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC (The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) was an important step towards attaining peace, but many Colombians displaced by violence from their predominantly rural homes and livelihoods now face new forms of risk, such as flooding, landslides and fire, in the urban spaces where they have mostly resettled.</p> <p>Our research analysed how people displaced by armed conflict become exposed to greater risk from environmental hazards. Colombia is highly vulnerable to earthquakes and volcanic eruption, and flooding and landslides caused by intense rainfall are an annual occurrence. According to the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD), around twenty million people were affected by disasters in Colombia between 2000 and 2019 (portal.gestiondelriesgo.gov.co), many of them in areas inhabited by internally displaced people.</p> <p>The research project 'Moving with Risk', funded by the ESRC, and the follow-on project 'The Art of Disaster Risk Reduction', funded by the AHRC, were a continuous interdisciplinary collaboration between; humanities, social science and natural science scholars at the University of East Anglia (UEA); psychologists and community-arts practitioners from the Psychosocial Institute for Disaster Risk Management at the Universidad de Manizales, Colombia; the Colombian Red Cross; the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD) of the government of Colombia; the disaster risk management units of three local government departments in Colombia, and; Colombian Human Rights organisation, DeJusticia. Co-creation and collaboration with local communities were at the heart of both projects. Our team engaged directly with 429 individuals which gave us a much wider reach across all four case study sites, located in marginalised settlements in Cazucá, Soacha, an urban working-class district of the Metropolitan Area of Bogotá,</p>		

in the city of Manizales, Caldas, some 300 kilometres west of Bogotá, and in two sites adjacent to Pereira, Risaralda, 35km south-west of Manizales. With populations of approximately four million, 400,000 and 500,000 respectively, these are regions where 30–60% of land is prone to flooding and landslide, and where overcrowding creates fire hazards.

Findings: For people facing the immediate risk of violence, displacement was the primary survival strategy, but it allowed for little consideration of environmental hazards (3.5). People resettled in ‘at-risk’ areas often prefer to remain in their new spaces rather than move yet again (3.5 and teocripsi.com/ojs/index.php/TCP/article/view/308). Despite not having effective formal channels for communal disaster risk reduction actions, displaced people are keen to work in broader coalitions mediated by academics to manage risk in their places of resettlement (3.2, 3.3). Our interdisciplinary research demonstrated the potential to further strengthen existing capacity through arts-based approaches, which helped break down issues of distrust and stigma for Indigenous and marginalised communities (3.1, 3.3, 3.4).

The following **outputs** were co-designed and co-produced with participating communities:

- 2.1 Resumen de Actividades Investigativas 2017–2018 (Summary of Research Activities 2017–2018). This booklet details the arts-based methodologies and artistic outputs in each case study site. It includes a DVD containing a film of all the artistic outputs of ‘Moving with Risk’: three theatrical plays written and performed by communities in Cazucá and Pereira, two dances created and performed by Indigenous women in two sites in Pereira, a story book written and illustrated by communities in Pereira, and a mural co-designed and painted by community in Manizales, now on public display in the library of Universidad de Manizales.
- 2.2 [Metodología de IdentificArte](#) (Methodology of ‘Moving with Risk’). This film details the arts-based methodologies used in ‘Moving with Risk’.
- 2.3 *Cuidando Ando Mi Territorio: Prácticas comunitarias en gestión del riesgo de desastres (Looking After My Environment: Community Practice for Disaster Risk Management)*, 2020. This book on disaster risk management is written and illustrated by communities in Pereira.
- 2.4 Online toolkit detailing our arts-based methodologies in both interdisciplinary projects. (Submitted to national and local government disaster risk management departments for approval for hosting; delayed due to pandemic but will be available post COVID-19).
- 2.5 Two exhibits in the World Bank/Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery online exhibition, [The Art of Resilience](#). These are: [Resilients](#), which captures the personal stories of how families have coped with forced relocation, and [IdentificArte: Movilízandonos con el riesgo](#), a theatrical play written and performed by community for ‘Moving with Risk’ project.

3. References to the research

- 3.1 ‘Telling it in our own Way’: Doing Music-Enhanced Interviews with People Displaced by Violence in Colombia, **Marsh, H., Armijos, M. T. and Few, R.** *New Area Studies*, 2020, 1(1), pp.132–164. Available at newareastudies.com/articles/abstract/32/ and held on file at UEA.
- 3.2 ‘Indigenous engagement, research partnerships, and knowledge mobilisation’ (report for Indigenous Engagement Programme funded by the AHRC), **Armijos, T., López Getial, A., and Ramírez Loaza, V.** 2019. Held on file at UEA and available at: webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20200601114551/https://www.ukri.org/news/esrc-ahrc-gcrf-indigenous-engagement-programme/related-content/moving-with-risk-teresa-burneo/
- 3.3 *COVID 19 Crisis: Lessons for Recovery. What can we learn from existing research on the long-term aspects of disaster risk and recovery?* **Few, R., Chhotray, V., Tebboth, M., Forster, J., White, C. Armijos, T., Shelton, C.** The British Academy, London, 2020. Held on file at UEA and available at: thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/covid-19-crisis-lessons-recovery/
- 3.4 ‘Connecting with Emotions: Exploring the Arts and Valid Research with Displaced Communities in Colombia’, **Franklin, J.** *Sentio, (SeNSS)*, 2019, 1, pp.69–70. Held on file at UEA and available at: sentiojournal.uk/issues/issue-1-validity/

3.5 School of International Development Research Briefing 14, Ramirez, V., **Amijos, T., Few, R.** DEV Research Briefing 15 (May) University of East Anglia, Norwich, **2019**. Held on file at UEA and available at; [Moving with Risk: Forced Displacement and Vulnerability to Hazards in Colombia](#),

Grants

Project: Moving with Risk – Follow on Funding. The Art of Disaster Risk Reduction: an arts-based approach to strengthening community and institutional capacity in Colombia. **(PI)** Hazel Marsh. **Funder:** AHRC follow-on funding. **Grant value:** GBP91,221.00. **Project dates:** 2019–2020.

Project: Moving with Risk: forced displacement and vulnerability to hazards in Colombia. **(PI)** Roger Few.

Funder: GCRF ESRC/AHRC. **Grant value:** GBP247,819. **Project dates:** 2016–2018

4. Details of the impact

Our projects, and the methodologies used to ensure the widest ownership of them, have played a key role in shifting perceptions, practices and policies both inside and outside of resettled marginalised communities in Colombia. The progression of work from impact-oriented research and engagement in 'Moving with Risk' to research-informed engagement for impact in 'The Art of Disaster Risk Reduction' has enabled us to build collaboratively a momentum of change in communities and in the institutions that represent them, and make policies that affect them. First, by creating spaces that enable healing from trauma, the projects have enhanced the psychosocial wellbeing of some of the most disadvantaged social groups in the country. Second, our facilitation of cultural expression in communities facing major ongoing risks has strengthened solidarity and directly enabled the emergence of new networks of neighbour-to-neighbour organisation, which have provided crucial support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Third, our project opened up mechanisms for the participation of hitherto marginalised groups in decision-making on disaster risk reduction. Fourth, the project has demonstrated how government agencies can recognise, respect and work with the capacities of marginalised social groups. Finally, our project is having direct influence on the design of policies and practices affecting at-risk communities, thus contributing to the creation of safer environments for disadvantaged social groups.

Impact on community practice. For socially and politically marginalised people who have suffered enormous loss and trauma as well as the disempowering effects of violence and displacement, traditional social science interviews can re-open wounds and cause extreme distress. In our research, conversations about music chosen by participants for its personal significance, and subsequent arts-based workshops, produced channels of community-led expression which generated trust, created new social networks, and opened spaces for communities in twenty-eight neighbourhoods across four municipalities to articulate their capacities, experiences, priorities, feelings and needs to us, to each other and to key stakeholders. We also used the arts to raise community members' awareness of state services available to them, leading to changes in practice at the community level. Testimonies from participating communities were collected in four case study sites: the city of Manizales in Caldas; the settlements of Caimalito and Esperanza Galicia near the city of Pereira in Risaralda; and Cazucá in the municipality of Soacha, Cundinamarca, just south of Bogotá. All quotations are translated into English from the original Spanish and to ensure anonymity pseudonyms have been used. Testimonies from participating communities indicate that our research:

1. Enabled healing from trauma: '[The music conversation] helped me a lot, after you came here ... I went to [the hospital] ... and asked for an appointment and then spoke to a doctor and he told me, "You have this and that" ... I felt a lot better afterwards ... if you hadn't come, I don't know, I'd just be here depressed' ('Elena', Caimalito, S1, p. 2).
2. Increased confidence and self-esteem: 'The project ... allowed me to recognise ... my capacities and talents' ('Dolores', Esperanza Galicia, S2, p. 6).
3. Built trust and collaboration between neighbourhoods, communities and institutions, strengthening community capacity to take ownership of disaster risk management:

'relationships [with the institutions] improved' ('Juan', Pereira, S3a, p.5). '[The project] brought together a good team of leaders from the neighbourhoods. With this group we're incentivised to do a lot more work' ('Pedro', Cazucá, S3b, p.16). This has helped communities to deal with the current pandemic: 'Living through the pandemic ... we're applying everything we've learned through [the project]' ('Antonio', Manizales, S3c, p.20).

4. Raised awareness of legal aspects of disaster risk reduction in informal settlements: 'now we know exactly which institutions to go to according to the requirements we may have, we're not so lost' ('Susana', Manizales, S4, p.7).

Impact on government policy and practice. For the Colombian Red Cross and government at regional and national levels, the community-led artistic outputs, presentations and performances touched the emotions profoundly and prompted change. The arts enabled stakeholders to view people displaced by violence beyond the legal category of 'victim' and allowed them to access the human stories behind the statistics. This produced new and inclusive institutional initiatives designed to bring community voices into decision-making. In the quotations below, all names are pseudonyms. The letters 'CRC' indicate representative of the Colombian Red Cross, 'NG' national government representative, and 'LG' local government. Testimonies from government and the Colombian Red Cross evidence our institutional impact through:

Transformed perceptions and understandings. Civil servants were moved to new understandings of the lived experiences and human consequences of displacement, leading to greater recognition of local non-technical forms of knowledge and a commitment to deepen and extend collaborations with affected communities: 'now we have a different perception ... and it's not going to be difficult to be able to work together and carry on doing activities' (Miguel, LG, Pereira, S5a, p.4). Civil servants also stated that the projects enabled them to see how, through art, 'you can reach the communities better' (Cristina, CRC, Pereira, S5b, p.8). This is significant because institutions usually find access to 'vulnerable' communities is 'complicated': 'I discovered that doing these kinds of [arts-based] activities, the community gets closer and "gives" more, believes [in the institutions] more, there's more empathy and more trust in what [we do]' (Cristina, CRC, Pereira, S5b, p.8). Art, a specialised professional from the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD) of the government of Colombia stated, 'offers the possibility of people not only enjoying themselves but of learning things, and not only learning but identifying their own potential ... [their potential] perhaps hasn't been identified before' (S6b).

Raised status of local knowledge. As a result of our work, the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD) of the government of Colombia has paid community members to formally present their artistic outputs at official events, raising the status of previously marginalised forms of local knowledge. UNGRD has indicated that community activities will now be a formal part of the government's annual disaster risk reduction month every year. Community-led theatrical performances created and produced for our research were included in the national government's 'Month of Disaster Risk Reduction' formal activities in Bogotá, 19 October 2018 (S7a).

Translated extract: "Innovative Tools to Strengthen Community Resilience", in which the UNGRD, the Universidad de Manizales and the UEA, UK, generated space for discussion about the importance of, and ways to, advance and strengthen processes of community ownership of disaster risk management ... communities ... had the opportunity to show, through theatre, how they are taking ownership of disaster risk management in order to create community resilience'.

Helped shape a more inclusive approach. As a direct result of our research, the government has recognised the need to include community voices in ongoing policy debates. Our research has stimulated new government initiatives: ours is one of three projects (and the only non-governmental project) that the Colombian government has selected to incorporate into a new 'National Strategy for Community Resilience (COMUNGERD)'. UNGRD has asked the project team to provide input on diversity and inclusion, which is being used for the development of new policy on disaster risk reduction to better target Indigenous and other marginalised social groups including low-income households, women and disabled and older people. In a letter dated 1 November 2019, the subdirector of UNGRD of the government of Colombia stated: 'Your ideas ... are a significant contribution for different public, private and community bodies that are part of the National System for Disaster Risk Management to join efforts for the strengthening of the community aspects of disaster risk management, which is vital for our country' (S7b).

Changed institutional practice. Representatives of the UNGRD of the Colombian government have stated that our projects have influenced their approach to working with internally displaced people who face environmental hazards in their places of resettlement and helped civil servants to recognise and value the knowledge of marginalised communities. A specialised professional from UNGRD wrote on 13 March 2019: 'In Colombia, apart from what you have done, I am not aware of any other studies that explore how displaced communities have developed their own capacities and measures to improve their safety' (S6a). Government representatives stated that, as a result of our projects, their focus has become more collaborative and horizontal: 'we started saying ... let's work with the community, build with them and let them tell us what they want, let them start telling us what disaster risk management is ... let's learn from them' (Sofía, LG, Manizales, S8b, p.4). Civil servants recognised that the projects' arts-based approach generates 'greater impact': 'as professionals, we assume when we go into the communities to build capacity that [they] have no knowledge of the topic ... the [projects] ... started from the premise that the communities do know, they just don't know the technical language' (Anita, CRC, Cazucá, S8a, p.1). Civil servants have started 'building together' with the communities and state that changing their methods has resulted in 'more participation' (Sofía, LG, Manizales, S8b, pp. 4-5). A specialised professional from UNGRD stated that the national government aims to make these changes permanent: 'we have to look for mechanisms to make these processes sustainable ... that's why at the UNGRD we're trying to implement the Strategy for Community Resilience [COMUNGERD], which aims to recognise [processes started via the project]' and 'seeks to recognise processes, give them visibility and integrate them into a network so that [the project work] continues' (S6a).

Media reporting that has raised awareness more generally. Government support for the project stated in a newspaper article reporting on community arts presentations, 3 October 2018. Translated extract: '[Through the arts activities] The government and municipality of Pereira want to approach all communities about the mitigation of risk ... to get to know them, to reach out to them ... this allows ... a means of promoting equality, inclusivity and respect for the other within an increasingly diverse society. Activities of this type allow risk mitigation throughout the length and breadth of the municipality. On this occasion [Indigenous communities performed], and through these processes the strategy will grow and expand to more communities and will keep reaching for the objective of guaranteeing safety and saving lives' (S9).

Impact on teaching and scholarship. The Psychosocial Institute for Disaster Risk Management at the Universidad de Manizales, Colombia, is incorporating our arts-based methodologies in the institute's post-graduate courses. The director of the institute states 'Without doubt, these ... projects allow the strengthening of the scientific community in the area of education' (S10).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

(all names of the interviewees have been changed for anonymity)

- S1 Transcript of interview: Elena, from Caimalito.
- S2 Transcript of interview: Dolores, from Esperanza Galicia.
- S3 Transcripts of interview: a. Juan, from Pereira; b. Pedro, from Cazucá; c. Antonio, from Manizales.
- S4 Transcript of interview: Susana, from Manizales.
- S5 Transcripts of interview: a. Miguel, LG, from Pereira; b. Christina, CRC, from Pereira.
- S6 a. Email from UNGRD Specialised Professional, 13.03.2019, b. Transcript of interview with specialised professional from UNGRD.
- S7 a. Month of Disaster Risk Reduction' formal activities in Bogotá, 19.10.2018, and b. Testimonial from Subdirector of the National Unit for Disaster Risk Management (UNGRD), 01.11.2019.
- S8 Transcripts of interview: a. Anita, CRC, Cazucá; b. Sofia, from Manizales.
- S9 Newspaper report on impact of community arts activities in Pereira. 03.10.2018.
- S10 Letter from Director of Psychosocial Institute for Disaster Risk Management at the Universidad de Manizales, Colombia, 18.01.2021.