



Schools play a **vital** role in every

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 EVALUATING QUITO'S SCHOOLS
- 4 DESIGNING RETROFITS
- 15 A PROGRESS REPORT
- 16 TAKING THE NEXT STEP

community...

Schools teach civics, educating citizens of their rights and duties. They foster an appreciation of culture through the study of literature and the arts. In schools, students learn the lessons of history, the discoveries of science, and the rewards of public service. Schools benefit the economy by providing a skilled and literate work force. They are used for social gatherings, continuing education, theater and musical productions, and sports. Schools are a measure of community well-being.

Earthquake-threatened communities need earthquake-resistant schools. When schools are closed because of earthquake damage, education is delayed and community life disrupted. Repair and construction of school buildings are difficult and expensive after an earthquake, when government resources are strained. Where school attendance is compulsory, communities have a moral obligation to provide a safe study and work environment. But most important, earthquake-threatened communities need earthquake-resistant schools to protect their teachers and children.

A recent assessment of earthquake risk to Quito, the capital of Ecuador, concluded that many of its public schools are vulnerable to collapse during major earthquakes. That assessment was made over a period of two years, ending in May of 1994, by a team of Ecuadorian and international scientists and engineers. They found that while Quito has not been struck by a major earthquake recently, it has been in the past and will be in the future. They recommended that Quito's public school buildings be evaluated and, if found vulnerable, strengthened.

In response, GeoHazards International initiated the Quito School Earthquake Safety Project in December of 1994. GeoHazards International, a nonprofit corporation dedicated to improving earthquake safety worldwide, collaborated with Ecuador's National Polytechnic School and the University of British Columbia in defining the project. It had three objectives:

- Evaluate the vulnerability of Quito's public schools to earthquakes;
- Design affordable means of strengthening a sample of those schools that are vulnerable; and
- Strengthen the sample of vulnerable schools.

This report describes progress in meeting these objectives during the project's first year and concludes by offering recommendations for making Quito's schools safe.

