

# Community and Disasters in Latin America: Strategies for Intervention

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## Summary

*The main argument in this document is that many disaster prevention models as currently applied in Latin America have fundamental conceptual and methodological flaws. These models are based on a formal but inappropriate conception of vulnerability and disasters, from which a series of conventional disaster prevention and management instruments are derived*

*It is proposed here that due to the economic and spatial processes that have occurred in Latin America over the last twenty years, local vulnerability scenarios are increasingly heterogeneous and undergoing rapid change. Consequently, there is a growing divorce between the instruments and interventions which arise from this formal conception and local people's own conceptions of vulnerability and disaster. This divorce is the basic cause of the irrelevance or failure of many disaster prevention programs in the region.*

*It is recommended that disaster prevention programs should be re designed on the basis of people's own conceptions of vulnerability and flexible strategies for intervention appropriate to local conditions. The implementation of such strategies in turn implies making profound changes in the institutional framework within which disaster prevention is implemented in the region, making that framework more decentralized, popular and realistic.*