

Using films as intervention strategies for volcanic risk reduction

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Research and analysis into the role that film plays in encouraging actions to reduce risk could help to inform future intervention strategies aimed at reducing risk from environmental threats. Here, we focus on risk reduction to volcanic eruptions and how we might best create, use, and track the outcomes of digital film tools to: a) raise hazard and risk awareness; b) foster social and cultural memory of eruptions; c) develop preparedness efforts, and d) strengthen local-to-national lines of communication. These aims were developed in partnership with volcano observatories, emergency managers and at-risk communities, who suggested film production as a means to realise them. We took a bottom-up, collaborative approach to making our films. Our collaborators (at-risk populations, scientists at the Servicio Geológico Colombiano and the Seismic Research Centre), are the leading 'actors', guiding the viewer through their experiences of an eruption, how they recovered and sharing the challenges of having an active volcano as a neighbour. Our films document experiences from two eruptions, La Soufriere, St Vincent (1979) and Nevado del Ruiz, Colombia (1985). These are two of the six case study volcanoes which are the focus of the 'Strengthening Resilience in Volcanic Areas' (STREVA) research project. To ensure the films were shared with citizens of at-risk communities, we organised several community-based film screenings in both St Vincent and Colombia, and used questionnaires and focus groups to evaluate the immediate impact of the films on learning and affect. Over 700 people attended local film screenings in at-risk areas around Nevado del Ruiz. In St Vincent, they were used to support the roll out of 'household emergency plans' and have formed part of the communication strategy for the national emergency management organisation. The films have received nearly 20,000 online views from 25 countries with the majority watching from St Vincent.