



Cities on Volcanoes 9
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'Understanding volcanoes and society: the key for risk mitigation'



Keeping people safe from volcanoes in the Eastern Caribbean: lessons from 60 years of operations.

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The UWI Seismic Research Centre (UWI-SRC) is responsible for surveillance of and fundamental research into volcanoes and earthquakes for the English-speaking Eastern Caribbean. It provides the governments of 9 contributing territories with accurate and up-to-date information about earthquake, volcanic and other geologic activity, including 19 live volcanoes. The research at the UWI-SRC is focussed on developing a better understanding of the geologic processes in the region so as to reduce risk and promote sustainable development. The UWI-SRC has managed volcanic eruptions, volcano-seismic crises, budgetary cuts, expansion and contraction in scale of operation and damaging earthquakes. Working with limited resources over a large geographical area demands cost-effectiveness, strategic focus and operational flexibility. The UWI-SRC has managed to thrive by making full use of opportunities that have either arisen or have been created by its own initiative. It has moved actively to develop partnerships with regional and international agencies that have generated extra-budgetary funding that supports and expands existing poorly resourced programs, develop new capacities and employs new staff. Its work program is dictated by the operational imperative to provide early warning of hazardous geologic phenomena organized through the work of small teams. A commitment to the highest standards in all its undertakings (within financial limitations) is a requirement of its mandate. Keeping abreast of the latest technological developments is critical in order to ensure that its instruments, data acquisition, processing and analysis are fully up-to-date. Focus on servicing its main stakeholders (vulnerable island communities) and building redundancy into the network are key requirements in a region exposed to multiple natural hazards. The monitoring methods, protocols, analytical techniques used and products created by the UWI-SRC have been honed by over 60 years of operations and in this presentation we share some of the measures that have contributed to our survival and growth.